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MICHAEL FERRYS.¹

BY MRS. HENRY DE LA PASTURE

[LADY CLIFFORD].

CHAPTER VII.

MICHAEL sat with a pen in his hand, beside the open window of a small bedroom with painted, wood-panelled walls that had once been white. The plenishing of this apartment was of the barest and most primitive. Facing the windows stood an old black wooden four-post bedstead that was too short for him; under his feet was spread a small threadbare square of carpet over the worm-eaten polished floor; the pictures were religious prints. On the common painted washstand the hot-water can, which had just been brought in by the old serving-man in his shirt-sleeves, had lost one hinge off the lid, which consequently would not shut. A piece of yellow soap lay on a white saucer which served for a soap dish; the towels were scanty, rough and torn.

Below the window lay a little square of garden with a grey stone fountain in the middle, and a lawn cut into diamond and heart-shaped flower-beds, gay now with daffodils and tulips.

This garden-plot was bounded by a circular carriage drive, and sheltered by tall forest trees and thick hedges of lilac and laurel from the town which had crept up to its edge. Through the scroll-work of old iron gates, however, could be seen glimpses of the sharply-descending street, paved with cobble-stones, and grey stone and blue-slatted, oddly-shaped houses in perspective; the smoke of innumerable chimneys rose above the brown tree-tops, and beyond the smoke again in darkly purple distance rose the hills, heather-covered.

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Michael stared at this prospect, which was a grey prospect enough, and not illumined by any touch of sunshine, though it was midday; and then his eyes returned to the sheet of note-paper before him, which was at present innocent of any kind of superscription save that of the printed heading—

*Bronville Hall,
Clode.*

The clock struck, and he started.

‘How long have I been sitting here? And I thought I had so much to say to her. Why do I find it so difficult to say it? It is the atmosphere of this house, its narrowness, its dullness, its emptiness, which depress me. There is no room for fancy, nor for the peace and joyousness of Aberfraw here.

‘Or is it only that I am getting bored with the whole thing?’ His reflections were tinged with a shade of dismay even while he laughed. ‘I suppose that is really the truth of it. *Unstable as water—thou shalt not excel.* But I’m afraid this sort of thing isn’t much in my line. The days are uncommonly long—’

He stretched himself, and then with sudden determination squared his elbows and dashed into his letter.

‘Darling, darling little love of my heart—I’m trying to write to you from Bronville, and to tell you the truth I’ve been trying to for an hour, and it’s difficult to begin, because you want a kind of history of my spiritual sensations and feelings and convictions, as the result of dear Uncle Joseph’s earnest instructions, and I am not in the least inclined to write anything of the kind—not even sure whether I have any to write. At this moment my mind is nearly a blank.

‘The gloom of Bronville is indescribable. Theoretically I am filled with admiration, for your grim and unbending Uncle Ambrose is a very remarkable man. His intense convictions, his stern determination to live up to the highest pressure of those convictions, his austerity, his abhorrence of luxury where his personal comfort is concerned, and sometimes I grieve to say even where the personal comfort of his guest is concerned—[*N.B.*—This [is a joke, my Winefride; you always say you wish I would tell you when I am joking, so I make haste to label the remark]—all these things which I observe for myself, and others which I am told; how he opened this house as a hospital when the smallpox raged in Clode; how he sold his last family acres (save the little corner of park bounded by the river at the back of this house) to build a great (and hideously ugly) church for the hundreds of poor Irish who work in the factories

up here ; all, all these things fill me with awe and respect, but they do not make me sing and leap for joy. Forgive me, for I'm afraid I'm relapsing into that tone of flippancy which frightens your mother so much—it signifies nothing, sweetheart, don't let it frighten you.

' Perhaps this mood of mine only means that I am wearied by long absence from you for whom my soul longs, and that I secretly and sulkily resent your edict, or your mother's edict of banishment.

' I liked better being at Swynbridge, in the funny little Presbytery with Father Joseph and his dear, smiling, peaceful septuagenarian French *junior*, who takes snuff, and preaches in broken English, whereby the congregation are sometimes put to it not to laugh aloud at his odd remarks. Here, however, we have certainly more time for talk, and as the family seem to think it as well that I should be approved by your beloved Uncle Ambrose, why, *me voilà* striving to win that approval. But, sweetheart, much I misdoubt me of failure in this respect, for his piercing blue eyes see through my shallow habit of thought in the most disconcerting manner, and yesterday at dinner he said to me in a booming voice "Are you never in earnest, young man?"

' His gloom does not seem to affect the simple gaiety of his Jesuit brother, however. Alas, for the tradition of Jesuitical wiliness! Did you ever know anyone quite so childlike as poor Father Joseph? Yesterday—these being his holidays—we went into Clode for a walk, and after a trudge across the moor, which restored my spirits and doubled his appetite, I persuaded him to come to a small conjuring entertainment, showily advertised and obviously so poorly patronised that I grieved with all my unregenerate heart over the lean and desperate-looking hungry creature who was craning piteously out of the box-office jutting into the street.

' It took me a long time to persuade my beloved preceptor that it was not a theatre, and I believe in the end he only consented to enter because he feared it would be unwise to deny my frivolous soul a certain modicum of amusement.

' His own enjoyment was pathetic.

' We sat in the two-shilling seats, and need I say that we had the whole front row to ourselves at this price? But he clapped for six, and his astonishment at the number of rabbits taken out of an ordinary hat was so audible that even the unsophisticated Clodians smiled.

' A poor old painted harriidan, in a yellow wig, dressed in gauze and sham jewels, was bound and shut up in a box, discovered immediately afterwards to be empty, etc. As she walked on from the opposite wing, smiling and bowing, Father Joseph whispered to me: "That is a very beautiful woman. I hope she is as good as she is beautiful," and there were tears of admiration in his kind, dim blue eyes. . . . I don't think Uncle Ambrose much approved of my outbreak, but Father Joseph stuck to it stoutly that it was very enjoyable and harmless, and right that he should see some of the wonders of the world, as these conjuring tricks undoubtedly were. He added benevolently that I was young, and must have some relaxation, and that he dared say that even such a beautiful entertainment as this was not to be compared to the London and Paris operas and theatres I was accustomed to. He has never been inside a theatre in his life, which to my practical ignorance of that section of humanity which he represents seems astonishing. I often feel as though he were the boy and I the old man; but then I also feel that I am not worthy to black the square toes of his shabby leather shoes.

' All this I write because after all my instructions I am not much nearer to what you wish, beloved, not much nearer to what I wish myself, alas! I have listened dutifully to much reasoning, only to be sure that with me it must be rather a matter of feeling than of reason. Indeed, this much is doubtless admitted, since grace to believe is regarded as the gift of God; and why then should anyone be angry or scornful with those who have not received this gift? But you are not angry or scornful, only sorrowful, my darling, and I would I could turn that sorrow into joy. As it is, the dumb argument which moves me most surely is that supplied by the vision of my Winefride in her white gown, walking up and down on the terrace with poor old Bernard, who is talking hopefully of a future which to him would not be complete without his friend Michael, while your little fingers search stealthily for the old steel rosary in your pocket, and your dear lips move, praying—praying always—for me, unworthy; whether you are there, out in the sunshine, or the mist, or the wind; or in the chapel, in the grey of early morning; or the evening dark, with the little red lamp glowing; or as you lay your dear golden head on your pillow. Do you think I don't know how you pray for me, and can you guess how infinitely the knowledge touches and impresses and sways me, sweetheart, so that my heart is full of gratitude as well as love, and longing to fulfil your least as well as this, your greatest, desire?

In truth half of me is melting as I write—and the other half looking on with a smile and a sneer, saying coldly, What sentimentality is this? You love your Winefride, but how will that make you believe what you don't believe——?’

Michael stopped and stared at the words he had written with a kind of startled, yet half-amused despair.

‘If I write that it will break her heart,’ he said to himself, ‘yet what can I write? How can there be pretence between her and me? I am trying, I am trying honestly and with all my might to see eye to eye with her. I see the effect of their religion on these good men; making a hard, miserly, sour, selfish curmudgeon like old Ambrose open-handed, charitable, self-denying, even humble so far as may be; and turning a weak, amiable, pleasure-loving simpleton like Father Joseph into something like a hero; giving him the guide and stand-by and backbone he requires. But then I never needed to be convinced of the beauty of holiness, nor of sincerity, nor of self-discipline. It jumps to the eye—if one possesses a shred of artistic instinct or perception. It is over the fences of dogma that I stumble. . . .’

He returned to the letter.

. . . ‘I can't get over the feeling that I am playing a part here. Heaven knows I mean to be sincere, but I find myself asking myself “*qu'allait il faire dans cette galère?*” after a long evening à trois, with Uncle Ambrose seated bolt upright in his carved chair in the study, and Uncle Joseph trying hard to keep awake in one corner, and I smoking endless cigarettes in another. All in semi-gloom, and with hardly an idea in common. It is appalling to think how shocked they would be if I spoke out my real thoughts and feelings, though of the most ordinary kind, of the average man. But then they are not average men, and there would appear to be a great gulf fixed between us; filled with the details upon which they set such solemn store, and which are to me so hopelessly unimportant. Yet each in his own way shows me true kindness, and Father Joseph told me quite simply, and as a matter of course, that he feared his brother was exhausting himself by praying so constantly for my conversion. Why should they care so much? But they care of course for your happiness, and thank Heaven they seem to have a kind of inkling that that depends on your marrying me. Write and tell me that it is so, my darling. I need all the encouragement you can give me, for I am bored here beyond description, beyond——’ Again he paused, and then lifting the neatly-written sheets he laid them evenly together, and tore them into small pieces.

'Why should I sadden her? And it *will* sadden her to read all that rubbish,' he muttered, with a restless movement of impatience and pity.

The thought crossed his mind as once before, and took as little hold as before—that he must rather hide his real self, his real thoughts, from Winefride, than reveal his innermost soul to her as his natural impulse bade.

He said to himself that he loved her too much to hurt her. His sentiment and imagination were quick and tender. He could not help seeing Winefride, as in a vision, stealing down the drive at Aberfraw in the early morning sunshine to meet the postman and get his letter. He knew the very hawthorn where she waited, and the glimpse, between the rhododendrons and over flowering buttercups, of the purple tops of the distant Welsh mountains. Almost the scent of the may came to him as he dwelt upon the mental picture painted by that most faithful artist, Memory, of the fair-haired girl he loved, and her setting of spring blossom. And he thought of her opening his letter with a happy flush upon her sweet face—the flush of eager hope—and could not bear the vision of her blue eyes filling with slow-gathering tears as she read—tears of disappointment and bewilderment—and of her stealing back into the chapel to hide her face before the altar and plead for submission and patience. He said to himself that he could not bear it.

He took another sheet of paper.

'My darling,—Everyone here is goodness personified. I had the kindest welcome from your Uncle Ambrose, and after a few days here I go back to London with Father Joseph to make the acquaintance of the celebrated Father Petroc, whom you probably know and revere, but whom I blush to say I had never heard of. Dear old Father Joseph in his humility believes that by reason of his great theological learning and his wonderful knowledge of men (he was a diplomat before he became a priest) and his eloquence and piety and powers of persuasion, he is peculiarly well-fitted to cope with my ignorance. Don't expect a very long letter from me just now, beloved. I don't want to write of anything but my love for you, who are everything in the world to me. . . .'

He finished this letter easily enough, addressed and stamped it, and put it in his pocket.

Then he left his room, stooping as he passed through the low doorway, and under an arch which led from the narrow passage on to the wide oak stair.

He descended this cautiously, for it was slippery and uncarpeted ; and in the comfortless hall looked about in vain for the letter-box, and decided to post the letter himself. He took his cap and stick, and walked out into the drive and through the narrow cobble-paved street of Clode.

At right angles to this street was a much broader road, and here a high-stepping chestnut mare in a smart buggy attracted Michael's attention before he heard himself hailed by the driver. With a great clattering of hoofs the chestnut was pulled up beside the kerbstone.

'Ferrys ! What in thunder are you doing up here ?'

'Been asking myself that question all the morning,' said Michael. 'How are you, Roath ?'

He was surprised at his own gladness to see Tom Roath again, and measured the extent of his boredom by that gladness. Michael had met him some years ago in Cape Town, liked him, and persuaded his father to show kindness to the young stranger. He had not seen him since that meeting.

'Where are you staying ?' Tom asked rather eagerly, and his open countenance showed disappointment plainly when Michael nodded backwards over his shoulder and replied laconically—

'I'm staying there.'

'At Bronville ? It's a curious old house, isn't it ? I've never been inside it myself, but I've heard of its secret chamber and sliding panels, and so forth. There's said to be a tunnel under the park to the river. But if there was, the mouth has been blocked up. I used to search for it as a boy from my boat.'

'Do you live here ?'

'My people live on the other side of the river. You can see our house from your windows. There's an eternal feud between my poor old Daddy and old Squire de Bronville.'

'Why ?'

'I expect it's my old man's fault,' said Tom, politely. 'He's got a frightful down on Roman Catholics for some unknown reason. My old dad's awful for getting his dander up about Papists—ill or well, he's always been the same. I say, are you staying any time ? Won't you come over and see us ?'

'I'll come to-morrow afternoon,' said Michael, rather thankfully, seeing his way to shorten a long Sunday.

'Come to lunch,' said Tom, 'and you'll see the lot of us. We're all at home, my sister Edith, and Frank and old Humphrey and me. The fact is, you see, my poor old dad's a bit dicky. He gets heart

attacks, and had a pretty bad one the other day, so we were all sent for in a hurry. My sister Edith's helping to nurse him, and he's practically all right now for the time being. Still at his age——' Tom shook his head.

'I'm sorry,' said Michael, with the sympathy that came naturally to his voice and eyes.

'Yes. Well, of course it's got to come, sooner or later,' said Roath, simply.

'Sure I shan't be in the way if I come?' suggested Michael.

'Lord, no! Do him good. He likes visitors, and we're all as dull as ditch-water. Come at half-past one, won't you?' He beamed all over his jovial rubicund face when Michael acquiesced, and after exchanging a few critical remarks about the mare, which was the property of Tom's elder brother, the two parted, and Michael posted his letter and walked back to the Hall. But the incident had made a break, and his spirits were restored.

He felt himself better able to face the gloom of the dining-room, where old Ambrose sat at the head of the table, and Father Joseph at the foot, and a very deaf butler waited, assisted by an obviously half-witted footman.

Michael had wondered why these servants were kept, until he discovered they were *protégés* of Father Joseph's, commended to the charity of his brother.

When he received this communication he asked if the cook were another *protégé*, and anticipated the answer, which explained the cooking in a word.

'For a long time we thought it was fits,' said Father Joseph, benevolently. 'Fortunately the poor fellow is rather afraid of Ambrose, who keeps him in better order than we did. And the butler and footman are so steady in that respect that it sets him an example.'

Somewhere about the middle of Father Joseph's large round beaming countenance could be traced with almost ludicrous exactness the cherub features of the little boy he had once been; the short nose, Cupid's bow mouth, and wondering eyes of limpid blue; and his likeness to Winefride half amused and half annoyed Michael.

Squire Ambrose was built on a larger scale, and his thin pointed features bore an exaggerated resemblance to those of his nephew Bernard.

Though the corners of his mouth drooped sourly, and though

his brow wore the pucker of an irritable temper, something of the same innate guilelessness, the same enthusiasm of the dreamer, yet shone in his blue eyes, which were not faded like Joseph's, but bright and piercing beneath his snow-white brows.

The old gentleman made daily efforts to put off his habitual taciturnity, and to maintain a light conversation for the benefit of his guest, though his subconscious self was occupied all the while with the composition of the draft of a letter to be sent presently to his Bishop. It was the simple Joseph who had cautioned his brother not to talk theology at meals lest his young friend and pupil should grow weary of the topic.

Mr. de Bronville's slow methods of carving and helping the dishes set before him were therefore punctuated by a series of comments intended to be playful and friendly.

'Eh? Now then, what have we here? What have we here? Jonas?' he would begin as soon as Father Joseph had said grace, speaking very loudly for the benefit of the deaf butler. 'Mutton, eh? A leg of mutton, and a very good dish, too. Where'd ye get it? One of Burton's killing, eh? That's good. That's good. We used to kill our own mutton, Mr. Ferrys, but that was a long time ago, eh, Joe? One of our own fowls, I make no doubt. The coachman's? Same thing. Same thing. Raised on my own corn, I'll be bound. May I give you a slice of mutton, Mr. Ferrys? Or the wing of a fowl? Mutton? I hope you like it cut thick as I do, and from the knuckle end. No? Well, well, lucky we don't all like the same thing.'

It seemed to Michael presently that a leg of mutton would make an ideal subject for a lecturer; since it provided an almost inexhaustible topic for a monologue; for the gravy, the colour, the choice of a well-done or underdone portion, the date of hanging, and the size of it, the age of it, and the breed of it, and other particulars could be entered into at any length, besides affording endless opportunity for platitudes.

Michael's depression returned upon him long before a rhubarb tart, with heavy pastry, and cream not of the freshest, replaced the mutton; but a chance pause gave him an opportunity of mentioning his meeting with young Roath, which he did with diffidence, recalling the existence of the feud.

Squire Ambrose looked gloomy, and Father Joseph regretful.

'I only know the second son, Tom. He tells me his father has had a stroke—no, a heart attack, and he seemed to think seriously of it.'

'He is reported to be breaking up,' said Squire Ambrose, briefly.

'You don't like him?' said Michael, with his frank smile.

'It is no question of personal feeling,' said Mr. de Bronville, with reserve. 'He is an enemy of the Church.'

'He opposed the building of this church, many years ago, though it was so much wanted, and though he knew the town was full of Irish Catholics,' cried Father Joseph, with his simple directness. 'That was very wrong of him. But the young men, the sons, had nothing to do with that, Ambrose. They were little children. They may be very good fellows.'

'Tom is a very good fellow,' said Michael.

Mr. de Bronville evidently chose not to pursue the topic. He was impatiently tapping the Stilton cheese before him with an old-fashioned silver scoop.

'Let me give you a little of this, Mr. Ferrys,' he said. 'A present from an old friend of mine. A ripe Stilton. Full ripe, perhaps, you will find it. He knows that I am particularly fond of a Stilton cheese, and sends me one from time to time. I suppose as a kind of return for the game I send him. This seems to me, however, to want freshening up with a little port wine. Brian! Port wine.'

Brian brought the decanter slowly, and Mr. de Bronville held a tablespoon over the hollow of the Stilton in a rather tremulous hand, and filled it slowly, and poured it slowly into the cheese, continuing his slow discourse concerning the giver and the gift.

'Here is a man whom I guess to be a saint in his own way,' thought Michael, 'a saint militant upon earth; whom his nearest relations declare to be so conscientious that they believe he has never deliberately done a thing he knew to be wrong in his life—who has given of his substance to the poor, and mortified his flesh, and sacrificed his wish to become a priest because, in his simplicity, he believes his position here, as head of an old historic family, to be a very great one to which he has been called by God; who plays spiritual providence, and for that matter material providence too, to a host of needy people, and yet—if his small talk did not obviously bore himself as much as it bores me, I should write him down a fool. In any case, whether he be a saint or not, it is unhappily certain that to an ordinary worldling like myself nothing could be more tiresome in detail than the trivial round of his daily life and conversation.'

CHAPTER VIII.

MR. ROATH did not, as a rule, trouble himself to pay much attention to his sons' friends, but even the most unworldly persons are apt to be unconsciously interested in the possessor of enormous wealth ; and he entertained, besides, a grateful memory of the South African magnate who had held out a helping hand to his son Tom ; wherefore he exerted himself to walk out upon the lawn before the drawing-room windows, and point out to Michael the superiority of the view over any that could be obtained from Bronville Hall.

Michael was more concerned than flattered by this effort of his host to do him honour, for the old man's obvious weakness and difficult breathing and ashen pallor betrayed the seriousness of his condition only too plainly, and he wished the invalid safely back in his chair before the window. Nor did the prospect appear to young Ferrys to be in any way remarkable save for the distant background of purple moor and hill, half-shrouded in a dull grey mist, but lending distinction to an almost featureless landscape of stunted wood, flat green fields, and a sluggish river rolling between low banks of mud.

He uttered what praises he felt possible, however, in a manner which was, as usual, so pleasing that the matter signified little ; and he was interested to observe the Hall from a new point of view.

It stood on the opposite side of the river, crowning a steep incline on the outer edge of the thriving and smoke-wreathed town.

A grey and gloomy dwelling, box-shaped, and shrugged sullenly away, as it seemed, upon its bare isolated square of ground, with only the rough paddock that sloped down to the river left of all the acres that had formed its park.

It was completely overshadowed by the church, which stood about a hundred yards distant from it, in a shrubbery of evergreen, and towering in its ungainly proportions above the few forest trees in its vicinity.

' You would scarcely guess from the outside what an old house it is,' said Mr. Roath. ' Much older than this, though this is by no means new.'

He turned and surveyed the stately Georgian mansion with fond eyes, that presently grew clouded. A sigh reminded Michael that the speaker knew very well that his residence in his beloved home was fast drawing to a close.

'Here is Edith, come to scold me for over-exerting myself,' the old man said.

'I told you not to come out, sir,' said Tom, in a self-excusing tone of some alarm.

'Stuff and nonsense!' said Mr. Roath.

Tom's father was merely an old edition of Tom. The broad shoulders were bent, the honest grey eyes dim, the yellow hair turned to grey; but both father and son stood six-foot-two in their stockings, and were fine specimens of North Country Englishmen.

The girl who came quietly but swiftly across the lawn towards them was surprisingly unlike either.

She was of medium height, and her figure was slender and well-formed and exceedingly upright. The carriage of her small head was expressive of calm decision and self-reliance, though the fire of her very fine dark eyes suggested that the calm was rather an acquired than a natural characteristic.

Remarkable her face certainly was, if not beautiful. The neighbourhood had long ago decided that Edith Roath had not a feature in her face and that she sometimes looked actually plain.

Yet beauty lurked in the dimple of her sudden charming smile, in the colour that could so easily be called to the clear, pale-brown skin; in the vivid animation and changing expression of her oval face when she was interested or excited. She gave Tom's friend a quick look and a smile, as his name was shyly mumbled by her brother, but her attention was for her father, and Michael was amused to perceive how guiltily the two big men faced her.

'Papa! What are you doing out here? Come indoors at once.'

'I was just coming, my dear. I only stepped out into the air for a moment,' said Mr. Roath, with none of the truculence he had displayed to Tom.

'Tom ought to have had more sense than to let you come out,' said Edith severely, and she drew her father's hand under her arm and led him slowly but resolutely back to his arm-chair in the drawing-room.

Michael thought her a charming tyrant, but he was obliged to own her reasonableness when he perceived the greyness of Mr. Roath's face, and the panting of his breath as he leant back in his chair.

Edith uttered no more reproaches; she brought a restorative

and administered it quietly, and as a matter of course, dropping the medicine into a glass with her steady, slender hand, and measuring it with grave dark eyes intent.

Something at once sweet and resolute in her manner, coupled with a complete absence of self-consciousness, made her extraordinarily attractive, though the attraction was perhaps rather intellectual than physical, and Michael's sympathetic and susceptible disposition did not permit his passionate love for Winefride Gryffydd to blind him for a moment to the charm of Edith Roath.

He found himself hardly less interested presently in the observation of Mrs. Roath, who, like her daughter, possessed a personality which it was impossible to ignore. Mrs. Roath came downstairs just in time for luncheon, apologising for lateness.

She was curiously young to be the mother of Edith, who in many ways seemed far more mature; curiously fragile and tiny to be the mother of those stalwart sons, for Frank was just such another big florid Saxon giant as Tom, though with less of intelligence in his face, and Humphrey, who came in last, was the tallest of all the four Roath men present, dark-haired like Edith, and with something of her charm of manner and expression.

Mrs. Roath fitted among them like a tropical butterfly transported to the alien grey of the North. Smaller, slighter and prettier than her daughter, with a plaintive note in her sweet voice, and a melancholy beauty of dark eyes and tender, tremulous mouth that was in no way Edith's, lacking also Edith's decision of manner and calm sense.

Bronville town said that Mrs. Roath should remember her years and dress in more matronly and conventional wise; but as Time seemed to have forgotten her, she wisely refused to recall herself to his notice, and followed the promptings of her own taste. Her subtle personality expressed itself in her clothes, though she had been unable to impress it upon the solid unchanging surroundings of a home planned and fitted and garnished in a day long past.

There was something Oriental in the colour she affected, that contrasted effectively with the dark hair and the little pale face that retained its youth so strangely.

As a child she had had an elfin countenance, and was called a little old woman; and now as the mother of grown-up children the delicate small features and great eyes were elfin still; and a twisted coloured scarf, the suspicion of a zouave, and a string of bizarre jewels, added to the Eastern suggestion.

The little shadows of weariness that Life had cast had dimmed her brightness, but could not destroy her charm ; there was that about her which roused the chivalry of men, young and old—not the sense of comradeship that Edith inspired, but the desire to protect and shield her, and do her bidding.

Michael divined a hint of tragedy about her, and felt resentful on her behalf, as though a woman so exquisitely graceful, so delicately pretty, ought not to be allowed to grow old. Almost instantly an understanding was established between them, and by the time he had taken his seat at the luncheon table he felt that he knew the whole family rather intimately.

He had supposed himself indifferent to creature comforts, but he was surprised to find how much satisfaction he took in the mere fact that the luncheon was well cooked and well served, with how much pleasure he ate, and with how much relief he found himself discussing the ordinary topics of the day, after his experiences of life in Bronville Hall.

Mr. Roath did not appear at luncheon, and Humphrey sat in the place which in all probability his father would never occupy more. He was seven-and-twenty years old, but looked much older. Michael gathered that he had just resigned his commission in the Grenadiers and that there was a question of his standing for Parliament. He observed that the eldest brother was far more polished in manner than Tom, who was rather of the rough, good-natured, outspoken order, or than Francis, who was inclined to cubbishness ; and also that Humphrey was obviously and undoubtedly his mother's favourite son.

After luncheon Mrs. Roath remained with her husband, and the rest of the party set forth on the usual Sunday round of inspection of the stables and farm. Michael presently found himself walking round the kitchen garden by the side of Edith.

'I hope you haven't been too much bored,' she said, rather apologetically. 'It's our weekly pilgrimage, and Papa would be wretched if he thought we hadn't been. When we were children we used to vow we'd never do it when we grew up, and we had a pretty shrewd suspicion that our visitors hated it. But you see it was as much the fashion in his day as family prayers, and Sunday would have been no more complete without it than without our learning a collect and saying our Catechism after breakfast, or going twice to church, or having roast beef and Yorkshire pudding for our midday meal, and cold supper to let the servants go to church.'

His parents did all those things, and Papa is very conservative. We had an awful job to persuade him to give up reading Bible stories aloud to us on Sunday evenings after we had grown up. In fact without Mummy's help we never could have done it. But I daresay you went through something of the kind yourself?' with the confidence of a contemporary.

Michael shook his head.

'No, but it is a subject that interests me. Personally I was not taken to church at all as a little boy, nor told Bible stories, nor given roast beef on Sundays, nor taught any kind of catechism.'

'Do you mean you were not taught any religion?' asked Edith, looking at him with frank interest now apparent in her beautiful dark eyes for the first time. 'Then you were spared all the searchings and heartburnings we all have to go through as we begin to think for ourselves.'

'I certainly had no heartburnings or searchings. Until lately I never troubled myself on the subject at all.'

She glanced at him quickly and curiously.

'Then the question is troubling you now?'

'I don't think it would,' he confessed, simply, 'but for the fact that I am engaged to be married to a Roman Catholic, on condition that I become one myself.'

'That seems rather a hard condition,' said Miss Roath, sympathetically. 'Though at the same time if I could have been born a Roman Catholic it is what I would have chosen. It is so nice and final, leaving one nothing to decide for oneself. It would save so much trouble.'

'That is what I feel,' said Michael, smiling at her frankly. 'And it is a beautiful faith, full of consolation. But——'

'You can't assimilate the details?'

'It is not that.' Michael hesitated. 'It is odd we should be talking on so intimate a subject——' he said, half laughing.

'One does not measure the possibility of discussing intimate subjects altogether by time,' said Edith, with her peculiar calm directness. 'One might know many excellent people for half a century and not be able to begin to confide in them. We are mutually, I imagine, aware of a certain similarity of mind which makes it perfectly natural and easy, even on our first meeting to talk of what really interests us. However, do not let us waste time in explaining *why* we are talking. I am interested, and so are you,

in the subject in hand ; and you hesitated because you suddenly remembered that you were talking to a woman and not to a man.'

'Not altogether. One confides far more easily, as a rule, in a woman than in a man,' he said, laughing and colouring. 'I think I hesitated because I realised suddenly, if you will forgive me for saying so, that you are very young.'

'I am six-and-twenty,' she said, serenely. 'I should not judge you to be very much older.'

'And I should not have thought you were—as old as I am. You certainly don't look it,' he said, rather surprised.

'Years have really very little to do with age,' remarked Miss Roath, in a dispassionate manner. 'Some people are old at twenty-six, and others rather childish at sixty-five. You must have noticed that.'

'I have always thought it rather futile to measure human beings as though they were clocks,' he agreed, 'when they mature, decay and die, more or less irrespectively of the time they've existed.'

'A girl of my age is much older than she was in our grandmother's time, even though she is no longer considered an old maid when she is twenty-five. For this reason: modern girls read freely, and modern books discuss religion and other problems openly, so that an intelligent girl is, intellectually, in advance of her grandmother, who wasn't allowed to read much that didn't square with existing beliefs on any subject. My father's mother was like that, and it has been a never-ending surprise and grief to my father that his daughter wasn't.'

'Your father is a very religious man?'

'The most truly religious man I have ever known, and one of the best and kindest. I can't even imagine Papa's wishing to do anything he knew to be wrong,' said Edith, warmly, and Michael nodded sympathetically. 'He does not, however, think it wrong to be intolerant; or rather, he is quite unconscious of being so, which, of course, is telling you that he is not a clever man.'

'He may be naturally clever, but strange to modern ideas,' suggested Michael.

'Just so. He is astonishingly ignorant of modern thought—intolerance is the sign-manual of ignorance,' she answered, calmly. 'It exists, I suppose, in exact proportion to lack of comprehension. But I do not think my father naturally clever. He has a dull mind.'

Full of goodness, and conscientious to a degree, but not capable of original thought. Plenty of common sense—why do you smile?’

‘At the impartiality of the manner in which you are dissecting your parent’s character, and to a stranger,’ he said, candidly.

‘I do not feel you to be a stranger, and I know you are to be trusted.’ But she coloured.

‘I do not see how you know that.’

‘Have you never heard of a quality peculiar to women called perception?’ she retorted.

He apologised with a twinkle in his brown eyes.

‘Do you suppose I should speak to you of my beloved father at all, in a critical spirit, if I thought you capable of imagining that it meant I did not love and honour him with all my heart?’

‘I am sure you are a good daughter,’ he said, warmly.

‘I would lay down my life for him—I suppose for either of them,’ she said, with the sudden animation and earnestness that rendered her face so charming, ‘but that does not mean that I do not look at them with critical as well as loving eyes, and I have a habit of analysing character—’

‘You have not lived in Clode all your life, I take it,’ said Michael. She smiled.

‘My mother saw to that. I was a restless child, and she was determined that I should enjoy everything she was herself denied in her youth. She sympathised with my longing to go to school, and I was sent first to Paris and then to Germany; finally to Oxford—’

‘Then you came out?’

‘Not quite in the ordinary way. I stayed pretty often with my uncle, Colonel Bertwald, who has a charming house in Eaton Place, and who, being a bachelor, was delighted to take me about with him. My father wouldn’t leave home; indeed of late years he has been unable to do so; and my mother wouldn’t leave him, so there was little question of London. But I saw enough—and tried enough—to convince me that the ordinary life of a “come-out” young lady would drive me mad.’

‘So you came home?’

She shook her head and smiled.

‘On the contrary, I went to the hospital.’

‘Which hospital?’

She named one of the largest London hospitals, and Michael

recollected that it was one of those to which his father had bequeathed a generous legacy.

‘Did you not know I was a trained nurse?’ she asked.

‘I knew you were nursing your father——’

‘He has another nurse, a night-nurse,’ she said, ‘but when he became so very ill I came to help. I take private cases, but it is not always easy to nurse anyone so very near and dear. They are more difficult than strangers. But he is very good now. It has almost reconciled him to my profession.’

‘I wonder he ever let you go.’

‘I was of age,’ said Edith, and her firm lips smiled slightly, ‘but all the same I could not have done it if it had not been for Mummy. She brought him round. I do not know how.’

‘Your mother—even my inferior male perception enables me to observe that *she* is as clever as she must once have been beautiful,’ said Michael, with the bluntness of youth.

Edith looked offended.

‘Beautiful can never have described her, but a pretty little thing she is and has always been, even bewitchingly pretty. And as for cleverness’—she paused—‘her mind is like a razor, keen, quick—it cuts other people’s feelings as deeply as her own, if I may run a simile to death. Yet she is almost uneducated. Perhaps that fact makes her the more original. Our old Vicar, who is a great scholar, says so; but he is her champion, like every man who knows her.’ Her face grew tender. ‘You had better not get me on to the subject of my mother.’

‘But I should like to, for she interests me exceedingly.’

Edith surveyed him with an amused smile.

‘She interests everyone. She has a most extraordinary power of fascination. Her charm masters even my father’s disapproval.’

His look and manner of interest drew her further into the confidences towards which she was already inclined.

‘Of course they are the least well-assorted couple in the world,’ she said, ‘so it is the more extraordinary that they should love each other so dearly. Papa never opens a book; he believes simply and faithfully everything his mother taught him as a little child; it never even occurs to him to doubt or to question. The problems of modern thought pass him by. He likes to read the Lessons in church, and though he is far too loyal to his old friend to question the Vicar’s innovations openly, he shakes his head over them, never dreaming how far behind the times is the dear old man himself.’

He would like all to be as it was in his father's day. He regards everything new, and especially anything he does not understand, with suspicion. He calls poetry rubbish, and though he likes a tune he can follow, any approach to modern music revolts him. And he married my mother when she was eighteen and he was forty. Well—you can guess what she must have been like—a little restless spirit, living in books and dreams. I don't suppose they had a thought in common.'

'Do you think—they found that out at once?' said Michael.

'I don't suppose so. She was so young. She had four babies in four years—and then she lost her health, poor little thing!' The daughter's tone was motherly. 'She has been unable to take much active exercise for years, and is generally on the sofa—but if anything her mind, her spirit, has been the more active for that. And I think it made her even dearer to my father—he is so tender for her——'

'I understand that.'

'He almost worships her; so do the boys. Not one of them is capable of looking at her impartially, as I do,' said Edith, rather mournfully.

'Are you sure you are impartial?' He looked at her with a laugh in his eyes.

'Perhaps I am not very sure,' she admitted, 'but at least I can see the spiritual and intellectual loneliness she has always endured. For, after all, my sympathy to which she clung was only the sympathy of a child. And then she sent me away. Now that I see what a sacrifice it must have been,' said Edith, simply, 'I am even more grateful than I was at the time when I was so eager to test my wings—to compete with my equals—to try school life.'

'What would you have become if you had stayed at home?'

'Discontented and aimless. I could not have been happy with the things that pleased the boys—my pony and dogs and gardening. I should have craved for something besides, and my father was jealous of my mother's time and attention. In his way he was exacting, and as I say, a child is not really a companion for a grown person, however quick of understanding. I craved equal companionship as much as she did, and she who understands everything understood. Now I have a number of mental interests, though naturally a nurse's life gives little time—but I was able not only to acquire a little of the knowledge I desired, and to sort my ideas——'

'And the result——?'

She smiled.

'I am talking a great deal too much.'

'Please go on. Let us take another turn.'

'Tom will grumble at me for monopolising you,' she said, shaking her head. 'You were beginning to tell me why you were so much interested in the subject I inadvertently touched, when I interrupted you with—'

'A character sketch of your mother,' he suggested, smiling.

'Exactly. It did not mean that I was not interested in what you were saying, but that I have a fatal habit of pursuing a train of thought, and a good listener is so rare,' she said, apologetically.

'I should be better able to continue *my* confidences if you would tell me the result of your mental adjustment,' he said, adroitly.

'You are afraid of shocking my orthodoxy?'

'Perhaps.'

'My friend,' said Edith, so gently and earnestly that the adjuration held nothing of priggishness, 'how much orthodoxy do you suppose is left to a girl who has read——?' She ran through a list of names more or less familiar to him.

'Your knowledge of German has opened up a wide field.'

'And yours?'

'I was educated at Heidelberg, but I told you that I am not a thinker. Also I am not acquainted at all with the works of half the writers you mention, and most superficially acquainted with the writings of the other half. Of course I know their trend vaguely.'

'I studied with all my might, and spent my spare time reading—until I entered the hospital,' said Edith. 'My opinions are now more or less fixed, I suppose,' with the calm certainty of youth. 'I am the better for having cleared my mind of all those cobwebs of superstition.'

Michael walked on in silence, with his eyes fixed on the ground.

'It revolts your sense of the fitness of things that I should talk so?' she said, with a touch of scorn.

He looked at her frankly. 'I cannot deny that it does.'

'Why should you wish me to believe what you do not believe yourself?'

'I am searching for the reason,' said Michael, candidly, 'and I can find no logical one save the fact that as I said just now you are a woman, and young, and I should like to look up to you as to a being more spiritually-minded than myself.'

'Then you *do* believe in the existence of a spiritual world?'

And as he hesitated she said severely, 'If not, you are talking nonsense.'

He evaded the question with a counter one.

'Does your mother?'

'She has taken refuge in mysticism because reading has stolen her belief in dogma. To me her state of mind appears chaotic. She clings passionately to an unknown God; prays literally without ceasing. She is in fact, naturally, intensely religious. There is nothing material about her. Her body is just the frail sheath of a mind made of fire; her imagination is a burning one, and her heart tender for all created beings. She is so generous that she would give away everything she had in the world. Her eager, secret, strenuous, silent search for truth is the most pitiful thing I have ever seen.'

'Why secret?'

Edith exclaimed.

'You cannot suppose she would hurt my father?'

'Do you mean that he—supposes you both to be—orthodox?'

'Of course,' said Edith, calmly. 'It would have broken his heart if my mother had told him. He is quite happy and satisfied with all she does. That she should even occasionally feel strong enough to go to church with him is a great joy. He sees her continually reading her Thomas à Kempis and other such books, and no doubt supposes she reads the service to herself when she cannot go to church. He would not understand any extremes of piety.'

'She has lived all these years by his side, and her thoughts are absolutely unknown to him?'

'Absolutely. There must be a good many women like that, don't you think?' said Edith, 'and how many men afraid to say what they think lest they should trouble their womenkind?'

'When did she begin to speak of such subjects to you?'

'Never. I began. When I left college I was very unhappy, and I soon saw she had no real comfort to offer me. When I stayed with my uncle in London I met a good many well-known people—clever men—scientists—and so forth. I asked questions of any whom I knew sufficiently well, or whom I found sympathetic. When I had driven them into a corner not one of them could declare that he believed in a Divine Revelation. You understand—' She paused. 'I am not stating that no scientists and no clever men could declare their belief, etc., etc.; but that those few, whom I happened to meet and question, would not. They hedged and

they hesitated, for, like you, they hated to hear a young girl say she did not believe in what they were finally obliged to own they did not believe themselves.'

'Yet that they should hate that, is in itself almost an argument in its favour,' said Michael, dreamily.

'You appear to me to mistake sentiment for argument,' she said. 'I can only tell you that of my many girl-friends—it is true that most of them were older than I, and that they were also the most advanced in thought among us, or they would not have been my friends,' she added candidly—'nearly all have come to the same conclusions as I have, though most of them keep their conclusions to themselves. Some of them are married, and faced with the problem of how to teach their children what they no longer believe. One of these said bitterly to me the other day: "I have heard it made a reproach to us that no woman ever yet invented a religion, but it would seem that men gave us our religions only to take them away. And what do they give us instead?"'

'Are there any Roman Catholics among your girl-friends?'

'Only one. A French girl. She was frankly agnostic, like her father and brother, and she told us that all her male relatives were the same. But she married, and her little boy died, and she wrote to me in one wail of anguish that she had gone back to the Church. She could not bear to believe that she would never see her child again, and she said there was a little angel, calling to her soul from Paradise.'

'Another argument.'

'Another emotion. Reasoning is not your strong point,' said Miss Roath, reprovingly.

'I wonder if reason has much to do with it. It seems to me to be more a question of instinct.'

'If you feel that, you have, as I say, more in common with my mother's mind than with mine. That is always her cry. "*I have an instinct. There is something. Why may we not call it God?*"'

'I believe that God reveals Himself in every individual soul,' quoted Michael.

'Who said that?'

'Tennyson.'

'It is strange you should quote that, for I have taken these two lines for my motto—

For modes of Faith let graceless zealots fight;
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.

'How are you going to make sure your life is in the right?'

'I made sure in my choice of a profession,' said Edith calmly. 'It struck me long ago that almost the only careers of which no one could dispute the absolute necessity were those of doctoring and nursing. The men and women who follow them must have the supreme satisfaction of knowing that no clashing of creeds, no scruples of conscience, can touch their choice of their life's work. Yet, when I come back here to my home—out of the atmosphere of the hospital—it is as though I had stepped into another world. The talk which is my daily shibboleth means less than nothing to any of them.'

Michael thought of the world in which his love lived—the quiet atmosphere of the old country-house, 'and the Catholic country-house at that'—he reflected, rather amusedly; and he told Edith that to him also it was as though he entered another world in going there.

'There are hundreds of such homes in our country,' she said, nodding, 'filled with gentle-mannered, intelligent, kind-hearted, busy people, who live very much as their fathers lived, and know nothing at all of the "movements" that the little world of literary and artistic London believes to be convulsing England—people who are amazed at the portraits of themselves presented in modern books by those who do not know them, nor their lives, nor their quiet ways of thought. All my people are of that kind, I think, except my uncle, who is busy trying to reform everything and everybody. Yours?'

'I have no people. All my relations—who were not at all of the class you describe and which I recognise, though I have only lately come to know it—are dead, except one old aunt, devoted to good works, who regards me in my wavering between Rome and Agnosticism as one standing between the devil and the deep sea.'

She smiled.

'I am not going to pity you. No one that ever I heard of prayed for more relations, so they cannot be universally regarded as blessings.'

'I have never bewailed their absence. Yet my love for my father was greater than I realised until after his death.'

'One's father and mother and brothers are different.'

'May I ask—?'

'Freely.'

'About deserting yours?' he said, abruptly.

'I told you they did not need me. Now that I can be of use in helping to nurse my father, I am here. You must see,' she said, sadly and gravely, 'that his days are numbered.'

Michael murmured a sound of sympathy, but the words 'What will your mother do?' escaped his lips.

'She will go—for her wander-year,' said Edith; a melancholy smile irradiated her dark expressive eyes. 'You think it will be a belated adventure? It is true that she has been too long a prisoner here. She is not of those who are made to vegetate. But never was any woman less dependent on her daughter. We understand each other perfectly, and she would be as miserable in condemning me to idleness as I should be in being idle. You look disapproving.'

'Why should you not marry?' he said, bluntly, and then coloured.

The colour was reflected in her clear brown cheeks, but she met his eyes in frank amusement.

'Do you contend that I should do more good in the world if I did?

'I am not a utilitarian. I am thinking of your personal happiness, of the wonderful companion you would be for some fortunate man,' he said, apologetically.

'People, in my limited experience, marry because they fall in love, and do not take the question of companionship into consideration at all; if one may judge by the ill-assorted couples one meets,' she remarked, impartially.

'That is true,' said Michael, in rather a meditative tone.

The clock over the stable struck four, and he started in dismay.

'I promised to be back for Benediction. Poor Father Joseph will be so unhappy!'

'I will show you a short cut to the ferry. You can get back in a few minutes that way.' And as he hesitated, 'I will make it all right with the others,' she said, imperiously. 'You can't break your promise.'

Michael demurred, but when she suggested that he should come to tea on the morrow and make his excuses in person, he hesitated no longer, and ran down the path she pointed out, to the river.

As he climbed the steep field on the other side to the grey church on the height, he remembered with a kind of amusement that he had thought to give himself a rest from spiritual exercises by a visit to Clode Park.

(To be continued.)

SWINBURNE AT ÉTRETAT.

THE year 1868 was one of the most troubled in Swinburne's existence. He had now reached his thirty-second year, and there had succeeded a reaction to his juvenile flow of animal spirits, to his inexhaustible fecundity and even to the violent celebrity which had stimulated and incited him as with the sting of a gadfly. His first period of creative energy had come to a close, and he had not yet begun, or only now was beginning, to launch steadily upon his second, namely the celebration in transcendental verse, and under the auspices of Mazzini, of the ideal and indivisible Republic. He was dejected in mind and ailing in body; the wonderful colours of youth were now first beginning to fade out of his miraculous eyes and hair. In April, having written 'The Hymn of Man,' and having sent his great prose monograph on 'William Blake' to the press, Swinburne paused and looked round him with a melancholy which had never afflicted him before. He complained, humorously and angrily, of 'illness hardly intermittent during weeks and months of weather which would have disgraced hell and raised a revolution among devils.' His principal pleasure was the encouragement given him by Mazzini, 'my beloved Chief, still with us, very ill and indomitable, and sad and kind as ever.' 'Siena' was finished in May, and 'Tiresias' was begun in June. Swinburne was doggedly and painfully working at what he always called '*His book*,' the Chief's book, the volume of political lyrics which Mazzini had commanded him to write for the glory of Liberty and Italia.

It was in the evening of July 10, 1868, that I first cast eyes on the poet who was at that time the divinity, the object of feverish worship, to every budding artist and faltering singer in England. The occasion was accidental, the circumstances painful; it is enough to say that the idol was revealed to the juvenile worshipper at a startling moment of physical suffering and distress, and that the impression was one of curious terror, never, even under happier auspices, to be wholly removed. I shall not lose that earliest, and entirely unanticipated, image of a languishing and pain-stricken Swinburne, like some odd conception of Aubrey Beardsley, a *Cupido crucifixus* on a chair of anguish. I recall it here, because, although in truth he was not nearly so ill as he looked, this apparition explains to me the imperative necessity which his friends found

in the summer of that year to get him away from London, away from England, and if so, whither, if not to his beloved France ?

It was projected that, so soon as he was well enough to move, he should go over to Boulogne, where a Welsh friend, Mr. Powell of Nant-Eôs, was to receive him. But this was not found immediately possible ; the poet's journey was delayed, partly by his own continued weakness, then by an illness of his mother, so that it was not until September that he joined Powell at Étretat. Of this, his preliminary stay there, little record seems to remain. It was already late for bathing, and the weather turned bad. The party soon broke up. But Swinburne stayed long enough to form a great liking for the village, which was anything but the fashionable watering-place which it has since grown to be. It was a cluster of little old houses, with whitewashed walls and turfed roofs, inhabited by a sturdy race of Norman fishermen. Étretat had been 'discovered' about ten years before this time by certain artists, particularly by Isabey and by the younger Clarkson Stanfield, all of whom kept their 'discovery' very quiet. But Alphonse Karr, in his novels, had been unable to preserve a like reticence, and Paris had now waked up to the picturesque capacities of Étretat. Villas were beginning to be built along the edge of the two chalk cliffs and down the Grand Val. It was none of these little smart villas, it was a dwelling of the local Norman type, which was to be identified in such a curious way with the legend of Swinburne.

Whether the purchase had already been made, or whether it was concluded after Swinburne left, or whether indeed the little place was not simply rented, year after year—at all events the beautified cottage in question passed about this time into the possession of Powell, who lived there for several years and entertained Swinburne summer after summer. He became an astonishing figure of eccentricity in the eyes of the simple fishermen of Étretat. It was he or Swinburne, or the precious pair of *farceurs* together, who gave the little house the sinister name of the Chaumière de Dolmancé, which presupposed a considerable amount of out-of-the-way reading in the passer-by who was to be scandalised. It did not scandalise, but very much 'intrigued,' a sturdy youth who often crossed its painted legend in his holidays, and who had already read enough 'undesirable' literature to wonder what this was all about, and what odd beings chose to advertise that they inhabited the Chaumière de Dolmancé. It is necessary to sweep away a good many cobwebs of romance in dealing with the relations between Swin-

burne and Guy de Maupassant, for the sturdy youth was no other than he. In the following pages I hope to clear up, in some measure, the mystification which each of them wove around the legend in later years.

In the first place, it is needful to understand that Maupassant was not the famous writer he afterwards became. He was a youth of eighteen, and six years were to elapse before his nostrils snuffed up the odour of printers' ink. Étretat was his mother's summer home. Very soon after his birth, Madame de Maupassant bought a small property in the Norman village, and here the future novelist's childhood was passed. The *curé* of Étretat prepared him for school, first for the seminary of the neighbouring town of Yvetot, that 'citadel of Norman wit,' and afterwards for Rouen; but all his holidays were spent among the fishermen of Étretat, going out with them in their boats by day and night, wrestling and climbing with their boys, scaling the slippery chalk cliffs to watch for their returning sails. It was not, therefore, a scandal-mongering journalist of Paris who pushed himself on the notice of the two Englishmen, but an extremely vivid and observant boy, practically native to the soil, who examined the strange visitors with a wholly legitimate curiosity. The good faith of Guy de Maupassant, which has been called in question, must be defended. During these years, and till the war broke out, Maupassant was a student at the Lycée of Rouen, working under the benevolent eye of Gustave Flaubert, rapidly advancing in solid physical vigour, but giving little indication of his future line of action except in the painful writing of verses. He was, however, preternaturally wide-awake; and, sweeping the horizon of Étretat, he became aware, summer after summer, of a remarkable pair of exotics.

The incident which led to his forming Swinburne's acquaintance must now be told with some minuteness, partly because, as an adventure, it was the most important in his career, and partly because it has been made the subject of many vague and contradictory rumours. Swinburne, as is well known, was a daring bather, and one of the main attractions of Étretat was the facility it gave for exercise in the sea. On a certain Friday in the late summer, at about 10 A.M., the poet went down alone to a solitary point on the eastern side of the *plage*, the *Porte d'Amont*—for there is no real harbour at Étretat—divested himself of his clothes, and plunged in, as was his wont. The next thing that happened was that a man called Coquerel, who was on the outlook at the semaphore, being at the foot

of the cliffs on the eastern side of the bay, heard continued cries for help and piercing screams. He climbed up on a sort of rock of chalk, called *Le Banc à Cuve*, and perceived that a swimmer, who had been caught by the tide, which runs very heavily at that place, was being hurried out to sea, in spite of the violent efforts which he was making to struggle for his life. As it was impossible for Coquerel to do anything else to help the drowning man, he was starting to race along the shore to Étretat, when he saw coming round the point one of the fishing-smacks of the village. Coquerel attracted the attention of this boat, and directed the captain to the point out at sea where Swinburne's cries were growing fainter and further. The captain of the smack very cleverly seized the situation, and followed the poet, who had now ceased to struggle, but who supported himself by floating on the surface of the tide. This was hurrying him along so swiftly that he was not picked up until at a point a mile to the east-north-east of the eastern point of Étretat. It is a great pleasure to me, after more than forty years, to be able to give the name of the man who saved the life of one of the greatest poets of England. I hope that Captain Théodule Vallin may be remembered with gratitude by the lovers of literature.

The story hitherto is from Étretat sources. I now take it up as Swinburne told it to me, not very long after the event. His account did not differ in any essential degree from what has just been said. But he told me that soon after having left the *Porte d'Amont* he felt the undercurrent of the tide take possession of him, and he was carried out to sea through a rocky archway. Now, when it was too late, he recollected that the fishermen had warned him that he ought not to bathe without taking the tide into consideration. He tried to turn, to get out of the stream; but it was absolutely impossible, he was drawn on like a leaf. (What he did not say, of course, was that although he was absolutely untiring in the sea, and as familiar with it as a South Sea islander, the weakness of his arms prevented his being able to swim fast or far, so that he depended on frequent interludes of floating.) At first he fought to get out of the tide, and then, realising the hopelessness of this, he set himself to shout and yell, and he told me that the sound of his own voice, in that stillness of racing water, struck him as very strange and dreadful. Then he ceased to scream, and floated as limply as possible, carried along, and then he was suddenly aware that in a few minutes he would be dead, for the possibility of his being saved did not occur to him.

I asked him what he thought about in that dreadful contingency, and he replied that he had no experience of what people often profess to witness, the concentrated panorama of past life hurrying across the memory. He did not reflect on the past at all. He was filled with annoyance that he had not finished his 'Songs before Sunrise,' and then with satisfaction that so much of it was ready for the press, and that Mazzini would be pleased with him. And then he continued: 'I reflected with resignation that I was exactly the same age as Shelley was when he was drowned.' (This, however, was not the case; Swinburne had reached that age in March 1867; but this was part of a curious delusion of Swinburne's that he was younger by two or three years than his real age.) Then, when he began to be, I suppose, a little benumbed by the water, his thoughts fixed on the clothes he had left on the beach, and he worried his clouding brain about some unfinished verses in the pocket of his coat. I suppose that he then fainted, for he could not recollect being reached by the smack or lifted on board.

The fishermen, however, drew the poet successfully out of the water. Ivy should have grown up the masts and the sound of flutes have been heard in the forecastle, as when Dionysus boarded the pirate-vessel off Naxos. Captain Vallin was not much less astonished at his capture than the Icarians were, for Swinburne immediately displayed his usual vivacity. The *Marie-Marthe*, for that was the name of the boat, proceeded on her voyage to Yport. The weather was glorious; the poet's body was rubbed by the horny hands of his rescuers, and then wrapped in a spare sail, over which his mane of orange-ruddy hair was spread to dry, like a fan. He proceeded to preach to the captain and his men, who surrounded him, he told me, in rapturous approval, the doctrines of the Republic, and then he recited to them, 'by the hour together,' the poems of Victor Hugo. He was given some food, and in the course of the morning the *Marie-Marthe*, with her singular supercargo, tacked into the harbour of Yport.

Meanwhile Swinburne's English friend and host, who had been near him on the shore, but not himself bathing, had, with gathering anxiety, seen him rapidly and unresistingly hurried out to sea through the rocky archway until he passed entirely out of sight. He immediately recollected—what Swinburne had forgotten—the treacherous undercurrents so prevalent and so much dreaded on that dangerous coast. After Mr. Powell had lost sight of the poet for what seemed to him at least ten minutes, his anxiety was turned into

of the cliffs on the eastern side of the bay, heard continued cries for help and piercing screams. He climbed up on a sort of rock of chalk, called *Le Banc à Cuve*, and perceived that a swimmer, who had been caught by the tide, which runs very heavily at that place, was being hurried out to sea, in spite of the violent efforts which he was making to struggle for his life. As it was impossible for Coquerel to do anything else to help the drowning man, he was starting to race along the shore to Étretat, when he saw coming round the point one of the fishing-smacks of the village. Coquerel attracted the attention of this boat, and directed the captain to the point out at sea where Swinburne's cries were growing fainter and further. The captain of the smack very cleverly seized the situation, and followed the poet, who had now ceased to struggle, but who supported himself by floating on the surface of the tide. This was hurrying him along so swiftly that he was not picked up until at a point a mile to the east-north-east of the eastern point of Étretat. It is a great pleasure to me, after more than forty years, to be able to give the name of the man who saved the life of one of the greatest poets of England. I hope that Captain Théodule Vallin may be remembered with gratitude by the lovers of literature.

The story hitherto is from Étretat sources. I now take it up as Swinburne told it to me, not very long after the event. His account did not differ in any essential degree from what has just been said. But he told me that soon after having left the *Porte d'Amont* he felt the undercurrent of the tide take possession of him, and he was carried out to sea through a rocky archway. Now, when it was too late, he recollected that the fishermen had warned him that he ought not to bathe without taking the tide into consideration. He tried to turn, to get out of the stream; but it was absolutely impossible, he was drawn on like a leaf. (What he did not say, of course, was that although he was absolutely untiring in the sea, and as familiar with it as a South Sea islander, the weakness of his arms prevented his being able to swim fast or far, so that he depended on frequent interludes of floating.) At first he fought to get out of the tide, and then, realising the hopelessness of this, he set himself to shout and yell, and he told me that the sound of his own voice, in that stillness of racing water, struck him as very strange and dreadful. Then he ceased to scream, and floated as limply as possible, carried along, and then he was suddenly aware that in a few minutes he would be dead, for the possibility of his being saved did not occur to him.

I asked him what he thought about in that dreadful contingency, and he replied that he had no experience of what people often profess to witness, the concentrated panorama of past life hurrying across the memory. He did not reflect on the past at all. He was filled with annoyance that he had not finished his 'Songs before Sunrise,' and then with satisfaction that so much of it was ready for the press, and that Mazzini would be pleased with him. And then he continued: 'I reflected with resignation that I was exactly the same age as Shelley was when he was drowned.' (This, however, was not the case; Swinburne had reached that age in March 1867; but this was part of a curious delusion of Swinburne's that he was younger by two or three years than his real age.) Then, when he began to be, I suppose, a little benumbed by the water, his thoughts fixed on the clothes he had left on the beach, and he worried his clouding brain about some unfinished verses in the pocket of his coat. I suppose that he then fainted, for he could not recollect being reached by the smack or lifted on board.

The fishermen, however, drew the poet successfully out of the water. Ivy should have grown up the masts and the sound of flutes have been heard in the fore-castle, as when Dionysus boarded the pirate-vessel off Naxos. Captain Vallin was not much less astonished at his capture than the Icarians were, for Swinburne immediately displayed his usual vivacity. The *Marie-Marthe*, for that was the name of the boat, proceeded on her voyage to Yport. The weather was glorious; the poet's body was rubbed by the horny hands of his rescuers, and then wrapped in a spare sail, over which his mane of orange-ruddy hair was spread to dry, like a fan. He proceeded to preach to the captain and his men, who surrounded him, he told me, in rapturous approval, the doctrines of the Republic, and then he recited to them, 'by the hour together,' the poems of Victor Hugo. He was given some food, and in the course of the morning the *Marie-Marthe*, with her singular supercargo, tacked into the harbour of Yport.

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horror, for there were shouts heard on the cliffs above him, to the effect that 'a man was drowning.' He gathered up Swinburne's clothes in his arms, and ran ankle-deep in the loose shingle to where some boats were lying on the beach. These immediately started to the rescue; in but a few minutes after their departure, however, a boat arriving at Étretat from the east brought the welcome news that no catastrophe had happened, but that the *Marie-Marthe* had been seen to pick the Englishman up out of the water, and to continue her course towards Yport. Mr. Powell, therefore, took a carriage and galloped off at fullest speed, with Swinburne's clothes, and arrived at Yport just in time to see the *Marie-Marthe* enter the harbour, with Swinburne in excellent spirits and wrapped in a sail, gesticulating on the deck.

What greatly astonished the Normans was that, after so alarming an adventure, and so bitter an experience of the treachery of the sea, Swinburne was by no means willing to abandon it. The friends dismissed their carriage, and lunched at the pleasant little inn between the *place* and the sea; and having found that the *Marie-Marthe* was returning to Étretat in the afternoon, they took a walk along the cliffs until Captain Vallin had finished his business in Yport, when they returned with him by sea. This conduct was thought eccentric; it would have been natural to prefer a land journey at such a moment. But, as the captain approvingly said, 'C'eut été trop peu anglais.' Everybody who had helped in the salvage was generously rewarded, and Swinburne and his friend were, for at least twenty-four hours, the most popular of the residents of Étretat.

It is not till now, at the twelfth hour, that Guy de Maupassant comes into the story. It is only fair to say that he never asserted, nor acquiesced in the assertion made by others, that he himself, on his own yacht, rescued Swinburne. A collegian of nineteen, at home for the holidays, a yacht was the last thing he was likely to possess. But he jumped on board one of those fishing-smacks which Mr. Powell sent out, and the boat he was on turned back only on hearing that the *Marie-Marthe* had already saved the drowning man. Who the latter was, Maupassant did not learn until the evening of the same day, when he discovered that it was the English poet who had arrived, not long before, to be the guest of a strange Englishman, accomplished and extravagant, who occasionally conversed with Maupassant, as he paced the shingle-beach, and who had already excited his curiosity. 'Ce Monsieur Powell,' says Maupassant,

'étonnait le pays par une vie extrêmement solitaire et bizarre aux yeux de bourgeois et de matelots peu accoutumés aux fantaisies et aux excentricités anglaises.' In later years Maupassant was in the habit of describing, and doubtless of amplifying, for the amusement of Parisian friends, these 'English eccentricities,' and in particular he regaled Heredia and the Goncourts with them. Edmond de Goncourt wrote a novel, once famous, which there are now none to praise and very few to read, called 'Le Faustin.' This work is evidently founded on the gossip of Guy de Maupassant; but no one needs to waste his time searching in it for a portrait of Swinburne, for it is not there.

Maupassant's obliging zeal in hurrying to Swinburne's help was rewarded on the following day by an invitation to lunch at the Chaumière de Dolmancé. The two Englishmen were waiting for him in a pretty garden, verdurous and shady. Their visitor describes the house as 'une toute basse maison normande construite en silex et coiffée de chaume,' the very type of building in which the tragedies and comedies of rustic life in the Seine-Inférieure were to figure, years later, in the tales of the juvenile visitor. The eyes of that visitor, by the way, if youthful, were exceedingly sharp and bright; although he had not yet learned the artifice of prose expression, the power of observing and noting character was already highly developed in him. His account of the meeting, accordingly, is a very curious document, and one which a historian must touch with care. As it advances, with the desire to astonish and scandalise, it certainly borders on the apocryphal, and justifies Swinburne's indignation towards the end of his life. But the opening paragraphs bear the impress of absolute truth, and truth seen by the most clairvoyant of observers.

This, then, is how our poet struck the Norman boy who had never read a line of his verses. 'M. Swinburne was small and thin, amazingly thin at first sight, a sort of fantastic apparition. When I looked at him for the first time, I thought of Edgar Poe. The forehead was very large under long hair, and the face went narrowing down to a tiny chin, shaded by a thin tuft of beard. A very slight moustache slipped over lips which were extraordinarily delicate and were pressed together, while what seemed an endless neck joined this head, which was alive only in its bright, penetrating and fixed eyes, to a body without shoulders, since the upper part of Swinburne's chest seemed scarcely broader than his forehead. The whole of this almost supernatural personage was stirred by nervous

shudders. He was very cordial, very easy of access ; and the extraordinary charm of his intelligence bewitched me from the first moment.' There may be a touch of emphasis in this, a slight effect of caricature ; but no one who knew Swinburne in those days will dare to deny the general fidelity of the portrait.

During the course of their life at Étretat the conversation of the friends continually turned on art, on literature, even on music, about which Powell was then greatly exercised. Swinburne did not recognise the difference between one tune and another, but he took a cerebral interest in music. The friends were entranced by the fame of Wagner and of Berlioz, who was much discussed in art circles ; it is to be doubted whether either of them had heard any of the compositions of these musicians performed in public or in private. It was the attitude of Wagner which attracted and delighted them, while Swinburne had a curious conviction of sympathy with Berlioz, who died just about this time, leaving a mysterious reputation behind him. I have heard Swinburne express an overwhelming desire to be present when ' *La Damnation de Faust* ' was performed, and he was prepared, or almost prepared, to take a journey to Leipzig for that particular purpose. He had read some of Berlioz' musical criticism, which used to appear (I think) in *Le Figaro*, and he exulted in the French musician's eulogies of Shakespeare. The ' *Mémoires* ' of Berlioz were published later, but I think Swinburne had read ' *Les Grotesques de la Musique*.' Rapturous appreciation of music which he had never heard did not preclude, on Mr. Powell's part, enjoyment of music which he shared with all the world ; and Offenbach, then loaded with the laurels of ' *La Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein*,' was an honoured guest at the Chaumière while Swinburne was there.

But it was literature and art on which the poet discoursed with the greatest glow and abundance. Maupassant was dazzled, as well he might be, by the erudition, by the imagination, by the daring, by what seemed to him the perversity of the incredible English genius. It is impossible not to regret that Maupassant neglected, on the successive occasions when he spent some hours with Swinburne at Étretat, to note down, as he could have done, even at that early age, with admirable fidelity, some of the meteoric showers which crossed the vault of that high conversation. It is true that some of them, as the Frenchman merrily indicates, would demand, or would have demanded in mid-Victorian times, the gauze of Latinity to subdue their brilliance. Maupassant was particularly

struck—and this is very interesting as the criticism of a Frenchman—with the Latin character of Swinburne's mind. He thought that the Roman imagination had no secrets from him, and Swinburne showed him Latin verses of his own, which Maupassant considered 'admirables comme si l'âme de ce peuple [the Roman race] était restée en lui.' Let us not ask whether the boy of eighteen was highly competent to judge of the Latinity of these verses; he could at least perfectly appreciate the poet's compliment.

As a Republican of the innermost sect of Mazzini it was necessary that Swinburne should proclaim, in season and out of season, his political convictions. He did not spare them to his young friend; and he did not conceal his loathing for 'the Accursèd,' as he called Napoleon III., then drawing much nearer to his end than anybody guessed. Maupassant was not scandalised by these opinions, but he noted the oddity of their being held by one so essentially an aristocrat, so much a noble to the tips of his fingers, as Swinburne evidently was. The visitor turned the subject to Victor Hugo, of whom the English poet spoke, as he always did, with infinite enthusiasm. As Swinburne's flow of unaffected conversation became easier and fuller, the astonishment of Maupassant increased. He thought his English acquaintance the most exasperatedly artistic human being whom he had ever met; and in later years, when he had become acquainted with all Paris, he still thought so. He was not altogether in sympathy with Swinburne, however. He considered that in his way of looking at literature and life there was something *macabre*; that, with all his splendour of thought, he suffered from a malady of spiritual vision, and that a perversity of temper mingled with the magic of his fancy. It would be folly to deny that, in this also, the young visitor showed a rare clairvoyance.

At the close of his visit to France in the summer of 1869, Swinburne devoted a month of the time otherwise spent at Étretat to an excursion of which no account has hitherto, I think, been published. It was in some ways so momentous, from the associations connected with it, that it ought to be recorded. Richard Burton, with whom Swinburne had now for some years been intimate, was appointed British consul in Damascus. As he had just returned from Santos in rather poor health, he was advised to take a course of the Vichy waters before he proceeded to Syria. He proposed that Swinburne should join him, which the poet, although greatly enjoying the sea-bathing at Étretat, instantly agreed to do. They met at Boulogne and reached Vichy on the 24th of July. Five

days later, the poet wrote 'Vichy suits me splendidly,' and indeed he was now entering upon one of the most completely happy months of his life. He delighted in the breezy company of Burton, and at Vichy they found two other friends, Frederick Leighton, and Adelaide Kemble (Mrs. Sartoris), whose 'Week in a French Country-house' had recently revealed the existence of a new and exquisite humourist. This quartette of brilliant compatriots met daily, and entertained one another to the top of their bent. Many years afterwards, when the other three were dead, Swinburne celebrated this enchanting month at Vichy in a poem, called 'Reminiscence,' which, for some reason or other, he would never include in any one of his volumes. In it he describes

how bright the days [were] and how sweet their chime
Rang, shone and passed in music that matched the clime
Wherein we met rejoicing.

He analyses of what the charm and what the radiance consisted, and he gives the first praise to

The loyal grace, the courtesy bright as day,
The strong sweet radiant spirit of life and light
That shone and smiled and lightened on all men's sight,
The kindly life whose tune was the tune of May,

in Leighton's conversation. Mrs. Sartoris was accustomed to sing for the three friends, with her incredible grace of vocalisation, and Swinburne describes how

A woman's voice, divine as a bird's by dawn
Kindled and stirred to sunward, arose and held
Our souls that heard, from earth as from sleep withdrawn,
And filled with light as stars, and as stars compelled
To move by might of music.

Finally, Burton's turn comes,

warrior and wanderer, crowned
With fame that shone from eastern on western day,
More strong, more kind, than praise or than grief might say.

It is much to be hoped that this very important biographical poem may find its place in the collections of Swinburne's works. It was written in 1890.

While he was thus enjoying himself at Vichy, full of quiet happiness, he was lifted into the seventh heaven—'lit as a mountain

lawn by morning,' in his own words—through receiving a letter from Victor Hugo inviting him to stay with him at Hauteville House in Guernsey. Swinburne had sent the Master an article of his on the newly-published novel 'L'Homme qui Rit.' Victor Hugo wrote back '*such a letter!* thanking me *ex imo corde*, as he says, (as if he to whom we all owe such thanks *could* have anything to thank anyone for!),' and ending up with 'Quand donc me sera-t-il donné de vous voir?' Swinburne immediately and gratefully replied, 'In a month's time, in September'; and on the same occasion he planned to spend 'not more than a week' in Paris, on his way from Vichy to Guernsey. He made arrangements to meet in Paris Paul de Saint-Victor, Théophile Gautier 'and perhaps Gustave Flaubert.' 'Tu conviendras que cela veut bien la peine de s'arrêter?' he writes at the close of July. But of all this glittering anticipation, nothing, I think, was realised. There was never a meeting with Gautier and Flaubert, and none with Hugo till 1882, when it was too late for happiness. Why did the bright scheme fall through? I do not know; but when Sir Richard Burton went eastward to Damascus, it seems certain that Swinburne came dully back to Étretat, and he was in London in October.

He wrote little, during these summer holidays on the Norman coast. But it may be of interest to record that the magnificent 'Epilogue' to 'Songs before Sunrise,' with its description of swimming at dawn, was composed at Étretat. The marvellous stanzas recording the sensations of the swimmer who,

softlier swimming with raised head
Feels the full flower of morning shed
And fluent sunrise round him rolled . . .
And urgent through the growing gold
Strikes, and sees all the spray flash red,
And his soul takes the sun,

are a direct transcript of the ecstatic adventures in early morning hours from the *plage* outside the Porte d'Amont, or off the moorings of some indulgent and astonished fisherman.

There remains only to add that the episode which has been described on a previous page, in the course of which Swinburne so nearly lost his life, has left a direct mark on his poetry. It inspired 'Ex-Voto,' a poem written at Étretat, but not published until eight years later, when it was included in 'Poems and Ballads, Second Series.' I have the poet's own authority for stating this, and in particular for drawing attention to the fact that the

following stanza (addressed, of course, to the sea), directly refers to his being nearly drowned :—

When thy salt lips well-nigh
Sucked in my mouth's last sigh,
Grudged I so much to die
 This death as others ?
Was it no ease to think
The chalice from whose brink
Fate gave me death to drink
 Was thine—my Mother's ?

When the Franco-German War broke out, Swinburne was lingering at Étretat. He almost immediately returned to London, murmuring on the journey the strophes of an ode which he was already composing to the glory of a probable French Republic. He never, I believe, visited Étretat again.

EDMUND GOSSE.

ON A MARBLE STAIR.

I can't afford a mile of sward,
 Parterres and peacocks gay;
 For velvet lawns and marble fauns
 Mere authors cannot pay.

BUT I possess a Marble Stair.

A stair, I say; not a staircase. The late Mr. Dan Leno, of pleasant memory, had a song upon the amenities of his place of residence, and, as was customary with him, interspersed the melody with passages of joyous prose. 'There's a river, and trees, at the bottom of my garden,' he would tell us expansively; and then, checking himself, with a look of anxious candour, 'Well yes, in a way the river's at the bottom of the garden; but *most* of the time the garden's at the bottom of the river.' (A pause, a quick inward struggle, and more candour.) 'When I say "river" it's not altogether what *you* might call a river; it's—it's—er—it's the overflow from the gasworks. . . . And the trees? Well, they *are* trees; but *split*, if you take me; palings; er—in fact they're a bill-hoarding.' Even so might I proceed and confess that my Marble Stair is only the half of a garden step, and of a back-garden step at that. But it is of marble; and moreover from this sequestered platform, without aspiring like Archimedes to move the world, I can at any time project myself like a bold diver into the great mundane movement.

But to understand this, and other magical properties of my Marble Stair, you must first hear how I came by it.

Not long ago I discoursed in CORNHILL of a wilderness garden called Priam's Cellars, and mentioned, as no small part of its charm, the tier of shipping that lies moored in deep water, yet close under the cliff. Of these vessels by far the most beautiful are the barques—Scottish-built and Italian-owned—which come to us in ballast and depart with cargoes of china clay for the Mediterranean. They are not only beautiful in themselves: in our eyes they wear a double beauty because we are so soon to lose them. It is but a few years since they began to visit us. In a very few years they will have vanished utterly—perished from off the seas.

To tell at length why they visit us and why, under our eyes, they are perishing, would be to write a curious chapter in the history of the world's mercantile marine. Briefly, it has all come

about through the Panama Canal. These most shapely craft, varying in size from six hundred to two thousand tons, were all launched from the Clyde to sail around Cape Horn and make money for British owners. In them the winged spirit of the sailing ship lingers out, surviving only because steamships cannot profitably stow the coal necessary for so far a voyage. But the Panama Canal will soon be cut; and then farewell to tall masts, sails, rigging, all the lovely vision!

But what do the survivors here, under the Italian flag?

Why, as the day of Panama approaches, British owners are selling them as fast as they can. And the Italians (or, to speak more particularly, the Genoese) are buying; for sundry reasons, of which two may be mentioned. (1) These blue-water ships have a considerable draught and would be useless for traffic in shallow seas such as the Baltic; whereas the Mediterranean ports are deep and can accommodate them. But (2) actually the Italian purchaser does not propose to employ them for more than a voyage or two. The cunning fellow has discovered that while his government levies a crippling duty on imported iron, iron imported in the shape of a ship is allowed to escape the tax; and so the noble hull, riding here so swan-like—'a thing of life'—has her sentence already written. A short respite there may be: but she goes to Genoa to be slaughtered, smashed up into old iron, which, having passed under the rollers, will be re-issued almost as good as new—and considerably cheaper.

A fair number of these barques keep their original Scottish names; possibly because the Italian firms have caught hold of our northern superstition that it is unlucky to re-christen a ship. On my list of them I find the *Banffshire* (800 tons), the *Loch Etive* (1230), the tall *Cressington* (2053), the *Bass Rock* (999), the *King Malcolm* (whose tonnage I forget), the *Emma Parker* (1157)—all of Genoa. (The *Emma Parker* has a skipper named Nicolo, and carries a dolphin's tail for a talisman on her bowsprit-end.) But the most of them have been rebaptized: the *Pellegrina O.* (1507), the *Maria Teresa* (1772), the *Gicomo* (1295), the *Penthesilea* (1661), the *Giuseppe d'Abunda* (993), the *Nostra Signora del Rosario* (899), the *Santa Chiara* and *Precursore M.* (both of 674); the *Bettinin Accame* (967), *Checco* (798), *Avante Savona* (1283)—all Clyde-built; all manned now by Italians, who on Sunday afternoons dance upon deck to the strains of fiddle and accordion, to delight us as we sit looking down from the terraced garden like gods from Olympus.

They are pleasant fellows, these Italian seamen, but terrible apple-stealers; and I confess this Olympian or (shall I say?) Phæacian atmosphere was shaken the other day by a severe thunderstorm on my discovery that a small but promising orchard had been stripped to its last fruit. Ulysses came *alone* to Phæacia, you will remember, having lost all his mariners by shipwreck; else I wonder what would have happened in that famous garden of King Alcinous, where grew tall trees blossoming, pear trees and pomegranates, and apples with bright fruit, and sweet figs and olives in their bloom.

The fruit of these trees never perisheth neither faileth, winter nor summer, enduring through all the year. Evermore the west wind blowing brings some fruits to birth and ripens others. Pear upon pear waxes old, and apple on apple, yea and cluster ripens upon cluster of the grape, and fig upon fig.

And there, as you remember too, King Alcinous reclined in his chair and drank wine like an immortal:

τῷ δ' γε οἶνοποτάζει ἐφήμενος ἀθάνατος ὥς

(a truly royal picture), while beside him his queen, having taken her work out to the garden, 'sat weaving yarn of sea-purple stain, a wonder to behold' . . . I am sure that my Italian visitors would never have spared those trees: and the Greeks, they say, are worse apple-stealers than the Italians—the worst in the world, in fact, with the single exception of my friend Mr. A. G. and his crew of yachtsmen, who as pillagers of orchards are *hors concours*.

The King sits in Phæacia town
Drinking the blude-red wine;
'O what I will give this akeely skipper?
A seven days, or a fine?

It sall be ten-and-six, and-six,
But and the costs forbye. . . .

Cynthia and Euergetes (I call our boatman Euergetes because it is not his real name nor anything like it) clamoured for revenge by legal process and an instant call on the police. But I cleared my throat and thus addressed them: 'Cynthia,' said I, 'and you, Euergetes, be good enough to remember that when we took over the tenancy of this plot our first resolution was to keep an equable mind, no matter what we might be called upon to suffer in the way of trespass.' But this (urged Cynthia) was stealing, and moreover forbidden in the Bible, not to mention the Ante-Communion Service; while Euergetes at once fetched up that masking smile of his which conveys quite respectfully, yet as plainly as words could put it, that

I am about to make a fool of myself. I accepted the challenge as usual. 'Euergetes,' said I, 'you are a brave man in some respects : but in the matter of snakes I think you are the biggest coward known to me. Last week you spied a solitary adder in this garden'—here Euergetes looked around him—'and had to go home incontinently and change your trousers, so certain were you that they harboured the rest of the brood.' Euergetes admitted that snakes went against nature, to a man bred on the sea. 'The Ancient Mariner,' said I, 'blessed them once, in a passage of remarkable beauty ; but I take you at your word. You shall paint a notice-board warning these seamen that this garden fairly teems with snakes ;' and I sketched out the following advertisement :

TO MARINERS

Notice is hereby given that these grounds shelter a nursery of serpents ; to be had for the trouble of taking away, as Owner has given up collecting.

Among the species represented are :—

Scorpion and Asp (named varieties).

Amphisbæna dire :

Cerastes (horned), Hydrys ;

Elops drear (early, prolific)

And Dipsas (recommended). 'Paradise Lost,' Book X.

INSPECTION INVITED

'But,' objected Cynthia, 'I have heard you say the most dreadful things about landlords and others who decorate the country with notice-boards.' 'True,' said I, 'and this one might help to discredit a bad custom. It is one of the uses of ridicule.' 'The bad custom we want to correct just now,' she retorted, 'is the custom of stealing our apples.' She gazed down with disapproval on the deck of the Italian, where a half-dozen swarthy villains were turning a winch very half-heartedly, drawing up basketfuls of ballast from the hold. Two men stood by the bulwarks to handle the basket and tip its contents down a wooden chute overside, whence it fell with a rush into the Harbour Commissioners' ballast-lighter. I watched this operation for some moments, and two things struck me ; of which the first was that the two Cornish lightermen, whose business it was to receive this ballast and pack it away smoothly with their long-handled shovels, kept easily ahead of the eight men on deck, not to speak of the unseen workers in the hold. I pointed this out to Euergetes, who answered that it was a poor job at which two of our fellows couldn't keep pace with a dozen foreigners. Now Euergetes, whatever his faults, is no vocal patriot, inclining

rather to be most caustic upon that portion of mankind with which he is best acquainted—so much so, indeed, that if ever he lays down his life for us it will be entirely for the sake of our shortcomings. It surprised me therefore to hear his testimonial to two working men with whom I knew him to be on neighbourly terms: but, 'It's the food,' he explained. 'What they give these foreign crews to eat on board wouldn't put heart into a —' Here he came to a sudden halt. He had been about to say 'rabbit'; but there were nets to be hauled that evening, and (as every Cornishman knows) if he had once uttered that ill-omened word, goodbye to all chance of fish! He substituted 'cat.' 'But,' objected Cynthia, 'that doesn't account for it at all; because these men have been eating our apples, and the very best.' 'Then,' I hazarded, 'perhaps they are suffering from incipient gastritis. We must account for it somehow.' 'At any rate,' she replied with calm, 'they seem to be working harder than any of *us*, at this moment'; whereat in some haste Euergetes took up his mattock and went off to dig potatoes.

After a pause Cynthia suggested that, if I didn't mean to take the boat and row off for the police, there were some roses that badly needed an autumn pruning; an infelicitous reminder as it turned out, and as you shall learn. For just at that moment I had made my second observation—that the Italian's ballast seemed to consist largely of cinders and small ashes. Now, when you come to think of it, ships do not usually employ ashes for ballast. . . . Just as I started to wonder at it, Cynthia's interruption shook these ashes out of my mind as through a sieve.

But I had no intention at all of rowing off for the police. 'The *Nostra Signora del Rosario*'? said I, reading the barque's name. 'Now I have a mind to put off and read her crew a sermon on that name; since, as it happens, Our Lady of the Rosary has a particular interest in thieves and the gallows. If you ever deigned to read my published works you would know that there is a story to that effect in the second chapter of "Sir John Constantine." I found it in a common-place book of Southey's, who got it from Vieyra; and mine was a short, rough rendering. But I have since discovered that it forms the theme of a beautiful story by the Portuguese writer Eça de Queiroz (he called it "Defunto," and it has been translated into English, under the title of "Our Lady of the Pillar," by Mr. Edgar Prestage, of the Lisbon Royal Academy). Briefly, the story tells that a young hidalgo, riding by night to

keep an assignation with a lady whose lover he had hopes to be——'

'Do you propose telling this story to the Italians?' interrupted Cynthia. 'It is,' I assured her, 'as full of morals as an egg of meat. To resume—this young hidalgo on his road happened to pass a gallows from which four corpses hung, and was pricking past when a voice said to him "Stay, knight; come hither!" And it goes on to tell how, being assured that the voice had proceeded thence, he rode up under the gallows and demanded to know "Which of you hanged men calls for Don Ruy de Cardenas?" Whereupon (says the narrative) one of them, that swung with his back to the full moon, replied—speaking down from the noose very quietly and naturally, like a man talking from his window to the street, "It was I, sir. Do me the favour to cut this cord by which I am suspended, and afterwards light the small heap of twigs by your feet that I may warm myself back to life and run beside you to your mistress: for my limbs are stiff." The young knight, then, having cut down the corpse—for a corpse it was——'

'And this,' broke in Cynthia, 'is positively the nastiest story I have ever listened to. . . . And if you *won't* fetch the police, I am off to my roses.'

'Wait a moment,' said I. 'These countrymen of Dante, these mariners from the port of Columbus, must have their better instincts, and to them let us appeal. They have pretty certainly stolen our apples, and in large quantities: but they have left us plenty and to spare. Come, let us carry them a maundful as a free gift; and I will lay you odds that they show themselves honest fellows.'

Cynthia shook her head. 'Honest fellows don't climb other folks' apple-trees.' 'Not often,' I agreed: 'Dante has been before you in noting it.

Rade volte risurge per li rami
L'umana probitate.

And yet,' I added, with a sigh for lost youth, 'one may happen up such trees on his way to honesty—or God help most English boys!'

The end was that we filled a 'maund' (deep apple-basket) and put off with it to the *Nostra Signora del Rosario*. There was no hope to dodge Euergetes, no matter in what corner of the garden we might invent occupation for him: for nothing escapes his cunning subdolent eye. But we could dumbfound him by an act of open lunacy, and for the fun of this Cynthia joined the plot. We took a second and smaller basketful to propitiate the lightermen,

The Italians dropped their work as we came alongside and hailed them. They made no difficulty at all about dropping their work. But when we asked in English and again in our best Italian (which is the worst) if they would do us the favour to accept some apples, they stared down and at one another and laughed, and answered (shaking their heads) that they were not buying any. 'No, my friends, and good reason for why!' I murmured, but persisted aloud, '*E dono* : Corban—it is a gift!' It was fun (as Cynthia afterwards allowed) to note the glances that passed between them and the shamefaced laughter that mingled with their polite expressions of thanks as they lowered the empty ballast-basket to receive the apples I poured into it from the maund; and the fun was doubled as, glancing up and over my shoulder as the filling went on, I caught sight of Euergetes on a high terrace, resting on his mattock and contemplating us.

Now you may urge (as Cynthia urged once or twice that evening) that the whole business, since it did not even force a confession, was as lunatic as it appeared to Euergetes. But wait! . . . A week or so later, sitting by my window here, I heard a confused noise of cheering and looked up to catch sight of the *Nostra Signora del Rosario*, laden, passing down to sea in the wake of our harbour tug. Her crew were waving hats and shouting *vivas*; and as the calls of my family fetched me forth, and it broke on me that this flattering demonstration must be meant for us, I saw the Italian tricolor dipping and rising on the halliards of the barque's cross-jack-yard. There was a fresh outbreak of cheering as I ran to my own flagstaff and dipped the British ensign in response; and so the *Nostra Signora del Rosario* passed out to sea and faded away, a thing of beauty.

'She never came back, she never came back,' any more than the various animals in Lear's haunting lyric. At Genoa they broke up her beauty for old iron,¹ and you may jump to the suspicion that her crew were merely bidding a boisterous farewell to a fool. But wait again . . . I have a notion that these men, separated and drafted into various other Italian vessels, must have returned to us many times, or at any rate must have spread some mysterious masonic word through the Italian mercantile marine. I begin

¹ No : a mistake ! Fate has spared her ; and by good fortune, just as I sat down to correct the proofs of this paper the *Nostra Signora* returned to us. She lies at this moment at her old moorings ; and, by equally good fortune, this is a great year for apples.

to think so because not only have our apples been immune ever since, but the crews of all these barques have ever since treated us with the jolliest politeness. We are positively afraid, now, to let our dinghy get left for a few moments by the tide, lest on Cynthia's re-appearance at the landing quay a boat's crew of these merry ruffians push off to the help of *la donna*—help of which she has (despite all I can say) the liveliest horror.

Do you complain that in the narrative I have rambled far from the Marble Stair from which I started? Wait yet once again, for I am returning to it and the thrill in my narrative has yet to come.

It happened that, some weeks before, I had called in my friend H.H., mason, to repair—or, rather, to rebuild—a back stairway in the garden. The job was to be a rough one—that is to say, I wished the stone to be so laid that one could plant sedums, stone-crops, and the like in the crevices; and after a brief talk I left it to him to find the material. He fell to work in due course, and sent in word to me at breakfast one morning that he had fairly started and would like my opinion on the stones he was using. I lit a pipe and went out to examine them.

'First-class stones,' said I. 'But where did you pick them up?'—for the step he was laying was composed of wrought slabs of a drab colour and in texture somewhat like the Caen stone the old builders imported for our churches. A quarry of it anywhere, in our neighbourhood, would be beyond price: but obviously these slabs came from no quarry direct.

'Why, sir,' he answered and with some pride, 'off the Italian that went out two days ago.'

'Ballast?' said I.

'Ballast,' said he; and for the moment I took it for no more than a pleasant windfall. All these Italians, and various other vessels, come to us with ballast; and I laugh still as I remember my late good friend A.B. (a Cambridge man, learned in geology) going almost on hands and knees before a heap of road metal and demanding to know where the devil these particular fossils found themselves in Cornwall? They had been carted up, a week before, from the hold of a French schooner.

My visitors get these surprises from time to time. Here I again intercept my climax with the story of another Cambridge man, whom I had led for a walk through woods where bamboos were among the commonest of exotic growths. 'A stranger,' said he with the accent of conviction, as we left the woods and regained

the highway, 'might easily suppose himself in the tropics'—and, as he said those very words, we rounded a corner of the road and came on an elephant! It was a real elephant, placidly sucking up water from a wayside pool; and of a sudden I understood what hysteria means, yet kept sufficient grip on it to steer him wide of a travelling circus which had encamped in a neighbouring field.

To resume—'It's a pretty stone, sir,' said my friend H.H., 'and, I should say, came out of a fine building. But here's something better still.' He brushed the dust and grit carefully, with the palm of his hand, from a block he was preparing to lay.

'Hullo!' I exclaimed. 'Marble?'

'White marble, sir.'

'From the same ship? . . . What ship?'

H.H. could not tell me her heathen name: but of course it was the *Nostra Signora del Rosario*. 'And the stones were all mixed up with a terrible lot of ashes. Smell? . . . My word!'

'Yes, I remember,' said I, and went off to seek the Harbour Master. 'Tell me,' said I, 'where did the *Nostra Signora* pick up that ballast she brought in the other day?'

The Harbour Master took down his great ledger, opened it, found the page, and ran his finger down the column headed 'Port of Sailing.' The finger came to a halt and I read—

'MESSINA.'

I shall not moralise this story, or write pages on the thesis. It is a bad earthquake—and Messina's was a hideous one—that brings nobody good. Rich men may decorate their houses with Egyptian porphyries, Spanish *broccatello*, green Carystian, orange of Verona, *rosso antico* and the rest. But mine is one marble stair, one white stone of the true romance. It is very small (it measures no more than fifteen inches by twelve); but I can stand on it; and the stairway so closely overhangs the sea that, had I the skill, I could take a naked dive from it of fifty feet sheer. From what palace it was dislocated I shall never know, any more than I shall know how many of its companions, shot amid the ashes of a Sicilian city, have been carried out and dropped for ever beneath these Cornish waters. But this one survives: it is mine. 'Which things'—although the story is true—

'Which things are an allegory, Philip!'

A. T. QUILLER-COUCH.

GOD'S PLAYTHINGS.

II. THE KING'S SON.

'This letter has given rise to various conjectures.'—*Dalrymple's Memoirs.*

From Ringwood, the 9th of July, 1685.

MY LORD,

Having had some proof of your kindness when I was last at Whitehall, makes me hope now that you will not refuse interceding for me with the King, being I know, though too late, how I have been misled; were I not clearly convinced of that, I would rather die a thousand deaths than say what I do. I writ yesterday to the King, and the chief business of my letter was to desire to speak to him, *for I have that to say to him that I am sure will set him at quiet for ever.* I am sure the whole study of my life shall hereafter be how to serve him; and *I am sure that which I can do is worth more than taking my life away;* and I am confident, if I may be so happy to speak to him, he will himself be convinced of it, *being I can give him such infallible proof of my truth to him that, though I would alter, it would not be in my power to do it.* This which I have now said, I hope will be enough to encourage your lordship to show me your favour, which I do earnestly desire of you and hope that you have so much generosity as not to refuse it. I hope, my lord, and I make no doubt of it, that you will not have cause to repent having saved my life, which I am sure you can do a great deal in if you please; being it obliges me to be entirely yours, which I shall ever be, as long as I have life.

MONMOUTH.

For the Earl of Rochester, Lord High Treasurer of England.

Knowing that I had been involved in the miserable final adventure of that unhappy Prince, James Scot, Duke of Monmouth, and even been with him in that last Council in Bridgewater, my lord Rochester showed me this letter with a kind of languid malice, and even had the indecency to smile at it and address to me a remark slighting to the unfortunate writer of that desperate appeal.

'For,' said he, 'had Monmouth a secret to reveal, though ever so base a one, he had disclosed it to save his life—and since he disclosed nothing 'tis proof plain this was but a fool's trick to catch mercy.'

He said no more, but I was minded to tell what I knew that I

might do justice to the memory of one wronged and wretched ; yet the impulse was but passing, for I knew that the secret his dead Grace had never discovered was one which for pity's sake I must be silent on ; and well I was aware also that what I could say would awaken no understanding in the cold heart of Lawrence Hyde. My Lord's Grace of Monmouth has been dead ten years, and in the potent and huge events that have changed Europe since, he has been forgotten by all but some of those poor souls in the West who called him King. But I, who joined fortunes with him in his reckless enterprise, hold often in my thoughts him whose fate is now reckoned but a trifle in the history of nations. Both in the exile that followed Sedgemoor and the years in England under His present Protestant Majesty have I considered silently the tragic mystery of this young man whose life was useless pleasure and whose death was bitter anguish.

It hath a curious sound that I, once penman to his Grace, should now be secretary to the Earl of Rochester ; I gave my master this reflection, and he laughed in his indolent fashion and answered that ten years had accomplished the work of a hundred, and that the rebellion in the West was ancient history. Yet when he had left me to my work I copied this same letter (written in a quick hand with the agony of the author showing in that forceful entreaty to one who had never been his friend), and I brought the copy home with me and now must write under it the explanation like the key to a cipher. Not to show any, but rather to bury or destroy ; not to betray the secret of the dead, but to ease mine own heart of one scene which has haunted me these long ten years.

It hath a turn of folly to write what will never be read, but the impulse driving me is stronger than reason, and so I make confession of what I know while holding my faith inviolate.

At the time of the capture of my lord in '85, the indecent cruelty of the then King in seeing one whom he had resolved to be bitterly avenged on, and in commanding to be published an account of those agonies he should have been most sedulous to veil, was much commented upon, and first gave his people the impression of that ill-judging severity of character and stern harshness of temper they soon found unendurably galling.

It was well known too at that time, that my lord had obtained that interview with the King by reason of the desperate letter he wrote, of the same trend as the epistle he sent to my lord Rochester, declaring he had somewhat of such importance to reveal that it

should put the King's mind at rest for ever concerning him. Various were the rumours abroad concerning this secret and what it might be, and as it was known from the King's lips that his Grace had revealed nothing, many supposed, as my lord Rochester, that it was but a feint to obtain an audience of his Majesty; yet how any could read those letters and not see they were inspired by the bitter truth, I know not. Some believed that it was that his Grace had been urged to his fatal undertaking by His present Majesty, then Stadtholder of the United Provinces, and that he had about him letters from that Prince's favourite, Monsieur Bentinck.

Yet all evidence was against this, and the Duke himself appealed to the Stadtholder to bear witness that he had no designs against England when he left The Hague, but intended for Hungary (for which purpose, indeed, the Prince equipped him) and had since been misled by the restless spirit of the Earl of Argyll and other malcontents whom he met, to his undoing, in Brussels.

More believed that the disclosure related to that subtle designing minister, the Earl of Sunderland, who was deep in the councils of the King's enemies, yet held his Majesty in such a fascination that no breath against him was credited, even at the last, when he ruined the King easily with a graceful dexterity that deceived even Monsieur Barillon, who is esteemed for his astuteness.

Yet what reason had my lord Sunderland, intent on far larger schemes, to lure my lord Monmouth into a disastrous expedition, and what object had his Grace in keeping a final silence about such treachery?

Nor would the revelation of the falsehood of his Majesty's minister or the discovery of the dissimulation of his Majesty's nephew be such a secret as his Grace indicated in his letter—'for I have that to say to him which I am sure will set him at quiet for ever'—whereas either of these communications would rather have set King and Kingdom at great trouble and dis-ease.

No one came near the truth in their guesses, and after a while no one troubled, and truly it is an empty matter now; still, one that containeth a centre of such tragic interest that for me the wonder and pity of it never dieth.

To bring myself back to the events of that fatal year (the recollection groweth as I write), it shall here be noted that I was witness of the great and bitter reluctance of my lord to lead this rebellion.

He was brave in his spirit, but of an exceeding modesty and softness in his temper, of a sweet disposition, averse to offend,

fearful of hardship, a passionate lover of life, generously weak to the importunities of others.

Yet for a great while he withstood them, avoided Argyll, shut his doors to Lord Grey and Ferguson and was all for retirement with the lady whom he truly loved, Harriet Wentworth.

But from Love for whom he would put by these temptations came the goad to urge him into the arms of Ambition, and she, who in her pride would see him set on a throne, joined her entreaties to the arguments of the men who needed a King's son for their leader, and pawned the very jewels in her ears to buy him arms. And he was prevailed upon to undertake this sad and bitter voyage with but a few adventurers whose much enthusiasm must take the place of money and wits, for of these last they had neither. At first his Grace's heart utterly misgave him and he was more despondent than any man had ever known him, being indeed in a black and bitter mood, reluctant to speak on anything but Brussels and my lady waiting there.

This brought him into some discredit with his followers, but Ferguson had spirit enough to inspire the ignorant, and Lord Grey, who, though a man dishonoured in private and public life, was of a quick moving wit and an affable carriage, animated the little company of us, not above a hundred, who had joined together on this doleful enterprise.

But when we had landed on the rocky shores of Lyme Regis, it was his Grace whose mood became cheerful, for his ready sensibility was moved by the extraordinary and deep welcome these people of the West gave us, for, whereas we who were at first, as I have said, but a hundred, in a few days were six thousand, all hot on an encounter and confident; truly it was marvellous to see how these people loved his Grace and how he was at the very height of joyous exaltation in this fair successful opening.

Taunton saw a day of triumph when his Grace was proclaimed King in the market-place by a mad speech of Ferguson in which wild and horrible crimes were laid to the charge of James Stewart, and I think Monmouth saw himself King indeed, at Whitehall, so gracious and gay was his bearing.

But my lord Grey looked cynically, for not a single person of any consideration had joined us, and, while the gentry held back, ill-aimed and untrained peasants were of no use to us. Yet had his Grace done better to trust their fanatical valour and march on for Bristol and so take that wealthy town, instead of spending

his time endeavouring to train his men—God knows he was no general, though a brave soldier in his services in the Low Countries !

While he dallied, my lord Beaufort was raising the trained bands, and my lord Feversham came down from London with some of the King's troops. Then came that attempt of my lord Grey on Bridport when he forsook his men and fled ; though this was proved cowardice, his Grace was too soft to even reprimand him.

In miserable searching for food, in vain straggling marches, in hesitations, in fatal delays the time passed ; his Grace might have had Bristol, a place abounding in his own friends ; yet, hearing that the Duke of Beaufort had threatened to fire it rather than open the gates, he turned towards Bath, saying he could not endure to bring disaster on so fair a city.

This faint-hearted gentleness was not fitted for the position he had assumed ; at Bath they killed his herald and returned a fierce defiance. So we fell back on Frome in disorder ; and my lord saw his visions melting, his dream of Kingship vanish, for in the same day he received three pieces of news : that the three Dutch regiments had landed at Gravesend, that my lord Argyll was a prisoner, and that my lord Feversham was marching upon him with three thousand men and thirty pieces of cannon.

And now the full utter madness of what he had undertaken was apparent ; we had neither cannon nor arms, scarcely powder ; and he who had seen the fine armies of Holland and France could not but see the hopeless position he held with a force of these poor peasants, the cavalry mounted on cart and plough horses, the foot but armed with scythes and pruning-knives. Despair and dismay gained an audience of his mind ; he fell suddenly into agonies of fear and remorse for what he must bring on these followers of his ; from everyone who came near him he asked advice, and the anguish of his spirit was visible in his altered countenance. He called councils in which nothing was resolved but the desperate state they were in, and nothing talked of but the folly that had put them there ; his Grace passionately blaming Ferguson and Argyll for their evil urgings. Then it was resolved to retreat on Bridgewater to be nearer the sea ; on this march some few left his Grace, but most stayed in a dogged love, and this faith touched his tender heart as much as his own danger, and wrought such a passion of weak agony in him it was piteous to see the expression of it in his face.

At Bridgewater he viewed the enemy through his glasses from

the top of the church tower ; there and then, I think, he knew that he gazed on a country he must soon for ever leave.

Alas ! alas ! In my nostrils is still the scent of that July afternoon, the perfume from the slumbrous grasses, the scent of the peaceful flowers. . . .

That day we had a very splendid sunset ; all the west was gold and violet and the whole sky clear of clouds, yet over the morass below the castle the marsh fog lay cold and thick, for lately it had rained heavily and the Parret had overflowed its banks, so the whole earth was wet—very clearly I recall all details of that day.

Here I come to that picture that is for ever with me—the last Council of my lord. Had I the skill of some of those Hollanders whom I have seen abroad, who can limn a scene just to the life, I could give this scene on canvas with every colour exact.

It was a room in the Castle, not large, looking on to the garden ; through the open window showed that emblazoned sunset, and a rose and vine leaf entwined against the mullions.

The panelling of the chamber was darkened and polished, above the mantelpiece was a painting of a stone vase of striped and gaudy tulips, very like, and there were logs ready on the hearth, for the evenings were chilly. On the floor was a little carpet of Persia, and in the centre a table with stools set about it, all of a heavy, rather ancient design. A little brass clock with a mighty pendulum stood against the wall on a bracket ; on the table were two branched candlesticks, clumsy and shining.

There were gathered the rebel officers, talking themselves into a boastful confidence ; the only man of quality among them, my lord Grey, stood a little apart beside the open window—and smiled ; he was a curious man, not well-favoured, but one whom it was pleasant to look upon, tall and dark, with that little fault in the eyes that casteth them crooked. My office was an idle one, for there was nothing to write, so I watched the others and felt chilled at the heart for the hopelessness of it all.

When the dusk gathered, my lord Grey drew the curtains across the rising mists and lit the candles slowly.

When the last flame rose up, Monmouth entered quietly : he ever had a light step.

Marred as he then was by his inward misery, he was still the loveliest gentleman in England and of a winning beauty impossible to be realised by those who have not seen him ; he wore a riding coat of brown cloth and a black hat with a panache of white

plumes, being more plainly dressed than ever he had been before, I think, in all his easy life.

They all rose when he entered, but he motioned them to their seats again, and I saw that he had not the firmness to command his voice to speak. He took the place they had left for him, and Lord Grey, shading the candle flame from his eyes, stared at him with that crossed glance of his and that little immovable expression of amusement on his lips. For a while they spoke together, to cover, as I took it, this dismal discomposure on the part of their leader.

But presently he took off his hat impatiently, showing his long soft hair of that English-coloured brown and his eyes, of the tint of a chestnut, that usually shone with so bright a light, and leaning a little forward in his chair he broke into astonishing speech.

'I cannot go on,' he said. 'I will not go on—there is nothing ahead but ruin.'

At these words that so stript the poor pretence of hope from their councils, these officers sat revealed as fearful and stricken men. They looked at Monmouth as one who would be the mouth-piece of their own terrors; my lord Grey withdrew himself a little from them and went to stand by the mantelshelf, from there observing all.

The red came into the Duke's face and he eyed them wildly.

'What are we going on?' he said. 'We are not such fools as to think we can prevail now. . . . I saw Dunbarton's Scots yonder on Sedgemoor. . . . I know how they can fight . . . they were under me at Bothwell Brig. . . .' He pressed his handkerchief to his lips and he was trembling like a sick maid.

They saw in his eyes that he considered them, as the play saith, on 'the edge of doom,' and as he had given them leave for ignoble thoughts, so each took advantage of it and bethought him of his own sad condition.

'We have but a rabble,' said one. 'And there is yet a chance to get over seas—'

'I cannot fall into the hands of James Stewart,' muttered Monmouth; 'for I have done that which cannot be forgiven.' And there was such pusillanimous fear in his wretched look of shivering dread that it passed like a panic through all that they too had done what could not be forgiven; nor was James Stewart a merciful man. One voiced the general terror:

'We could get to the coast before any guessed we had left Bridgewater—in flight lies our only chance.'

Then my lord Grey made this speech.

'There are six thousand people have left their homes to follow you—would you, my lord, abandon them to that fate ye cannot face yourself?'

Monmouth looked at him; maybe he thought it strange that the man that had been a proved coward under fire should speak so intrepidly in the council, yet he was too unnerved for a retort or an answer.

'Oh, you,' added Lord Grey, with a flick of a scorn in his tone, 'who took the title of a King, and are a King's son, cannot you make a more seemly show of it than this?'

'It is my life,' said the Duke in a piteous agitation. 'Five thousand pounds on my head . . . to die as Russell did . . .'

'You are a King's son,' repeated Lord Grey.

In a desperate passion his Grace answered him.

'Why did you induce me to this folly? It was you, that villain Ferguson and Argyll—'

'He has paid,' said the other quickly.

'As I must pay. . . . My God, was I not happy in Brabant? You but wanted my name to gild your desperation—'

'We would have made you King,' said Lord Grey, and he smiled a little.

There fell a silence, and it seemed that the Duke would speak, but he said no words.

'Come, gentlemen,' spoke out my lord Grey. 'The Council is over—you will have your orders before morning—all expedients are ineffectual; now each, in his own way, must go forward to the end.' He took up the candle to light them from the room, and they, being men of a little station, were overawed by his quality and went; two of them deserted that night, and one betrayed us by firing a pistol to warn Lord Feversham of our approach and so got the King's pardon. God be merciful to the others; I think they died unknown and brave.

I, being trusted because there was a price on my head and I had borne the torture in Scotland, was asked by Lord Grey to stay and help hearten his Grace.

We endeavoured to reason him into going into Castle Field, where Ferguson preached to the miners and ploughmen; he would not, but in a weak agony abused Wildman and Argyll as the engines of his torture, and he had the look on him we call 'fey'; I believed he was near his death. . . .

So the night fell very misty and warm, and my lord would not lie down, but sat in that little room struggling with anguish.

He had his George of diamonds on and often looked at it and spoke incoherently of how King Charles had given it him . . . surely my pity was more provoked than my scorn, for he was soft and gentle in his ways and so had gained much love.

That morning one had complained to him Lord Grey should be dishonoured for his behaviour without Bridport—and he had answered: 'I will not affront my lord by any mention of his misfortune—' yet here was he sunk in utter misery while Lord Grey strove to rouse in him a manly and decent courage with which to be worthy of these poor brave souls who loved and followed him; presently he came round to his old and first appeal.

'Remember you are a King's son.'

It was near one in the morning by the little brass clock, and I sat wearily by the door that led to the bedchamber; the Duke was at the table, and as my lord Grey spoke he looked up and began laughing. He laughed so long and recklessly that we were both dumb in a kind of horror, and when at last he came to a pause in his laughter there was silence.

Now the Duke discovered some fortitude: he rose and helped himself to wine, which brought the fugitive blood back into his cheeks and he held himself with more dignity, though there was that wild look of unsettled wits in his wide-opened eyes.

'My lord,' he said, 'and you, sir—bring the candles nearer and I will show you something——' He put back the admired locks that screened his brow and took from the pocket of his inner coat a leather book that he laid on the table before us.

'What is this?' asked my lord Grey.

The Duke untied the covers in quiet and let fall on the polished wood all manner of odd and foolish papers, letters, complexion wash recipes, charms and notes of his journeyings in Holland.

These he put aside and drew from a secret lining a silver case such as is used for a painting in little.

It was my thought that it contained the picture of Lady Harriet, which we were to return to her if either lived to do it, and I was sorry for this lady who had been so faithful in her love.

¶ From one to the other of us the Duke looked strangely; his face was flushed now and beautiful as in former days when he was the loved one of that great brilliance at Whitehall, yet still he had

the seal of death on him, and, worse than that, the horrible fear of it writ in every line of his comely countenance.

'Please you, look here,' he said; he opened the locket and held it out in his palm.

'What is this?' he asked in a husk and torn voice.

It was the likeness of a man, very fairly done, who wore a uniform and cravat of the time of the death of King Charles I.

Lord Grey looked at it quickly.

'It is your Grace,' he said; then, seeing the dress—'No,' he added, and glanced swiftly at Monmouth—'who is it?'

'It is Colonel Sidney taken in his youth,' I said, for I had known the man well in Rotterdam when he was attached to the court of the late King Charles, then in exile there. And I gazed at the painting . . . it was a marvellous fair face.

While I looked my lord Duke had three letters out from the same secret corner of his book, and I saw that two were in the writing of Colonel Sidney and the third in a hand I did not know, the hand of an ill-educated woman.

'Who is this?' asked Lord Grey with an amazed look. 'Surely Colonel Sidney was never any concern of your Grace?'

He stood with the picture in his hand and Monmouth looked up at him from the old worn and folded letters he was smoothing out.

'It is Colonel Sidney,' he said.

'Well?' asked Lord Grey intently.

'He was my father,' said Monmouth; then he began laughing again, and it had the most doleful sound of anything I have ever heard. I could not grasp what had been said, but my lord Grey with his quick comprehension seemed in a moment to understand and value this truth.

'Your father!' he said softly, and added: 'To think we never saw it!' which was an extraordinary thing to say; yet, on looking at the likeness in little and on the fair agonised face staring across the candlelight one might notice that they were in almost every detail the same, and methought I was a very fool never to have observed before how these two men were alike, even to little manners and fashions of speech.

And being that I saw the tragic pitifulness of it all, I could do no more than laugh dismally also.

'See you these letters if you want proof,' said Monmouth.

'There is no need,' answered my lord Grey. 'The likeness is enough.' Then he repeated: 'And we never saw it!'

'No,' said his Grace half-fiercely; 'you never saw it—I was always the King's son to you—instead of that I am scarce a gentleman. . . . Now you know why I cannot go on. . . . I am no Stewart, I have no royal blood. . . .'

Grey looked at him, turning over in his mind, I think, the aspects of this bewildering turn; he gazed at Colonel Sidney's son with a curiosity almost cruel.

I was thinking of the obscurity from which he had sprung, the mystery round his early years in Rotterdam, his sudden appearance in a blaze of glory at Whitehall when the King had made him Duke. . . .

'Who did this?' I asked. 'And who kept silence?'

'King Charles loved me as his son,' he answered vaguely, 'and I loved him. . . . I could not have told him—and I was ambitious. What would you have done?' he cried. 'I did not know until I was fourteen.' He pressed his hand to his breast.

'But I will not die for it,' he muttered. 'Why should I die for it?'

'Your death must become your life, not your birth,' said Lord Grey.

'My death!' shivered Monmouth.

Lord Grey turned to face him; thin and harsh-featured as he was, he made the other's beauty a thing of nothing.

'Why?' he said commandingly. 'You know that you must die—you know what will happen to-morrow and what you have to expect from James Stewart, and those honours that you have won in life will you not keep to grace your death?'

'I cannot die,' answered Monmouth; he rose and began walking about in a quick passion of protesting anguish: 'I will not die.'

'That you cannot decide; the manner only is in your power,' said Lord Grey calmly, and I marvelled to think that he had been a coward in open field.

'I am not the King's son—' his Grace cried out at him, and fell across a chair sick with unavailing love of life.

Lord Grey took up a candle and turned to the door, looking at him the while.

'Will you give James Stewart this triumph?' he asked.

This seemed the one thing to brace Monmouth, for those two had always hated each other strongly; James in the old days had feared my lord's power, been jealous that he was the elder son of

the elder son, and Monmouth seemed to remember that; yet a mean thought hurried on the heels of the manly reflection.

'He would give me my life for this,' he said weakly. 'My life for this secret—'

'Good-night,' said Lord Grey—a strange man—and left us.

The Duke seemed not to know that he had gone or that I remained; after a little he went into the bedchamber, but not to sleep, and all night I heard him weeping . . . such sick and bitter womanish sobs all through that long watch I kept. . . .

Colonel Sidney's son!

Who were they who did this—and they who kept silence?

A curious commingling of motives, sordid and lovable, ambition, some little love, some touch of self-sacrifice. . . . I felt compassion for King Charles, who had had no deeper feeling in all his spoilt life than this affection for what was not his. . . .

I put the wasting candles out and sat in the dark; I lifted the curtain and saw the sun rise over Sedgemoor.

Six thousand men to fight against hopeless odds to-morrow for him they deemed a King, the blood of Bourbon and Stewart, the heir of Tudor and Plantagenet. . . .

And in my ears was the thick sobbing of a mere Englishman of a stock that scarce boasted gentility, who could not face the end of his masquerade nor fit the robe of greatness he had assumed.

* * * * *

So here is the secret revealed at length to the dumb and innocent paper; God knoweth it is, as Lawrence Hyde saith, a great while ago; for the rest, the world knows how the Duke rode out to Sedgemoor with such a look in his face the very children knew he was marked for doom, and how he fled, leaving his men to gain great honour after he had forsaken them. Also how he was found in peasant's dress, so changed they did not know him till the George of diamonds flashed out on his tattered garments as he fainted in his captor's clutch. Lord Grey was taken with him; they stayed at Ringwood two days and from there his Grace wrote frantically to the King and to Lord Rochester.

It is very clear he meant to buy his life with his wretched secret, though I think my lord Grey must have been ever urging him to die with a decent carriage.

So they brought him to London and he was taken before his Majesty, swordless and with his hands tied behind him.

What passed no man knoweth but James Stewart ; he has spoken often of it, and I know those to whom he has told of Monmouth's ignoble desperate pleadings for life at any cost, of his casting himself down and imploring mercy.

Yet he must have been spurred by something in the demeanour of his ancient enemy, for he never told his secret, and he left the presence with anger and dignity, resolving, it must be, to cheat the King of that last satisfaction. Yet afterwards he fell again into unmanly misery that was the wonder of all, and then into a strange mood that was either the apathy of despair, or, as some said, an exalted enthusiasm. I wondered then and now where his proofs were : not found on him with the other poor trifles I had seen at Bridgewater Castle—destroyed, perhaps. And so he died, hurried reluctant from life, without either religion or repentance, sorry for the blood shed in the West, firm in his love for Lady Harriet, indifferent to the clergyman who cried out on the scaffold :

‘ God accept your imperfect repentance ! ’

He would not join in the prayer for the King ; when they goaded him he said ‘ Amen ’ with a careless air.

Knowing as I do what bitter terror he felt, what ghastly anticipations he had, what agony he had endured at the thought of the sheer moment of death, with what shivering sickness he felt the axe, with what horror he eyed the headsman, I cannot bear to write or think how they mangled him. . . .

And so he died ; he brought much misery on the innocent and he was maybe a worthless man, yet I could weep for him even now. I am glad he did not speak ; Lord Grey has been ever silent and no one else knows.

* * * * *

Among all those who watched that fair-haired head held up it is strange there is not one to think it showed little likeness to the dark-browed Stewart Kings. . . .

Here the paper is endorsed in another hand :

‘ If this be truth then this was a thing ironical. The writer of this rambling manuscript and the Earl of Tankerville, once Lord Grey, are dead, and there be none that know save God who knows and judges.’

MARJORIE BOWEN.

THE GENIUS OF PASTEUR.

It is pitiful how this word *genius* has suffered on its travels through mankind. To see such a word at the mercy of loose talkers, is to be reminded of Christian and Faithful in *Vanity Fair*. The meaning of their names, and the sound of their voice, were lost in a place like that. The populace neither understood them, nor was content to leave them alone: they were maltreated by fools, who at last put them in a dungeon and left them there. So it is with all words of a contemplative character: they are roughly handled by ignorant folk who will neither think them out nor do without them. Among these martyr-words, none has experienced worse abuse than *genius*—or, to call it by its right name, *Genius*. Seeing what upstart words adorn themselves nowadays with capital letters, we must not refuse to *Genius* this mark of distinction: for it is one of a highly connected family, all of them mentioned in the 'Who's Who' of words living or lately deceased. *Genius loci*, for example, is a fine conception: any word might well be proud of belonging to the old faith that places may somehow be inspired, may have more than ourselves in them, and may address themselves to us. It is true that rural deities and local nymphs are not true: still, this pagan creed outworn, that there is a personal influence in this or that bit of the country, this or that home, has its advantages over the childish definition of genius as an infinite capacity for taking pains. Infinite or finite, all capacities must come from somewhere: and genius is where they come from.

Perhaps, to restore this word on its throne, we must look away from definitions, and look at facts. There have been men and women of genius: they are rare, but there have been some. There was Pasteur. By what sign, or signs, do we know, past all doubt, that he was a man of genius?

It is a sign of genius, if the work of a man's life obeys and fulfils a plan which seems to have been made not by him but for him: if all the good in him is orderly brought out, as a conductor brings out every instrument in the orchestra: if we cannot so much as look at him without an immediate and irresistible sense that he was all of him design, none of him chance; that he was an idea worked out, a programme got through. Once we think what Pasteur did with his life, we see that genius had its designs on him. The man himself

is a better argument from design than any amount of Paley's Evidences. For he is taken, in the straight course of his work, up every rung of the scale of creation, from inorganic matter to man : and he only left off there, because man is the top rung of the ladder. Physics, inorganic chemistry, organic chemistry, ferments, diseases of wines and beers, diseases of silkworms, diseases of poultry and sheep and cattle and swine, diseases of man—up he went, his genius directing every step, from the discovery of molecular disymmetry to the discovery of the protective treatment against rabies. As the embryo, advancing toward birth, dreams its way through lower types, experimenting with ducts and gills and tail, and then discarding them, yet, after birth, still bears the impress of these experiments, so Pasteur thought his way up through creation. He began with mathematics, which is where creation begins : and he lived to hear of the first few thousands of children saved with diphtheria-antitoxin.

But there is another sign of genius, in the abiding power, the continuing output of a man's work, after he is dead. Pasteur died more than sixteen years ago, September 28, 1895. The example of his life shines on us, and his memory is one of the world's treasures. Such purity, loving-kindness, and humility, were daily in him, such passionate reverence for facts, such faith, laborious patience, and self-judgment. The sound of his name is like music : and his epitaph was written, long ago, in the saying that the righteous and the wise and their works are in the hand of God. That is to say, their works are still going on, still making themselves useful, here and now, on earth. Men to-day are advancing them along new lines, adapting them to fresh purposes, raising them to higher levels, and carrying them to logical consequences. That is just what it is for a man's work to be 'in the hand of God' : it must be there, to be here : if it were not there, it would be nowhere. The man dies, but the genius of a man's work, or the work of a man of genius, whichever we prefer to call it,

Lives through all life, extends through all extent,
Spreads undivided, operates unspent :

as Pope says, putting the whole case into the nutshell of a couplet. So Pasteur's work, like Newton's and Darwin's—'up to heaven, all three'—lives and moves to-day through the world's affairs, turning them this way and that.

Sixty-four years ago, as it were to begin with, he made out the

molecular disymmetry of certain crystalline substances : and we have it, on the authority of Dr. Tutton and Professor Frankland, that by this discovery, when he was only twenty-six, he founded 'one of the most wonderful departments of modern chemistry.' His line of argument in 1848 has been 'fully vindicated and substantiated,' and is followed, at the present time, in the quest for new synthetic products. Then came the next item on the programme. In his work on the disymmetry of crystals, he had chosen, for especial study, tartaric acid and its salts. Science, pure unapplied science, was all that he was thinking of, when he chose this one group of substances. Behold, he had chosen, blindfold, a grape-acid, a by-product of fermentation, a deposit of wine-casks, a commercial article. By this choice he was taken straight, like a man keeping an appointment, into the kingdom of the ferments. Once he got there, his genius turned him loose on the whole world-wide business of brewing and wine-making ; and, with him and his microscope, came the end of the old haphazard John-Barleycorn ways. If it were possible to write the history of alcoholic drinks, there would be Noah, and there would be Pasteur ; the one planted a vineyard, the other used a microscope : Noah happened by chance on the making of 'national beverages,' Pasteur taught the nations to be scientific over the making of them. He revolutionised this colossal industry ; the genius of his work is active to-day in every brewery. His lectures to the vinegar-makers of Orleans are a classic, and his great book on wines and beers is the 'Novum Organon' of brewing. So it always is with him ; all that he touches turns to gold—to other men's gold.

But, early in his work on the ferments, he was led from increasing the world's wealth to improving the world's health. It is fifty-five years since he read to the Lille Scientific Society his paper on lactic acid fermentation, the ordinary 'turning' of milk ; and the news, that milk turns sour because germs turn it sour, reached Lister, and was interpreted by him. If milk in a jug were blood in a vein, then the souring of a pint of milk would be a case of acute blood-poisoning. The milk has been infected, it has been wounded with those non-sterilised germ-laden instruments, the feet of a fly : the *bacillus lactis* has been introduced into its system—even a jug of milk may have a system. Fifty-five years ago, this household fact was a discovery, and more than a discovery ; it was the very making of the germ-theory, and of modern surgery ; and Lister, all his life, gave thanks for Pasteur's guidance. From 1857

onward, the two discoverers were drawing nearer to each other, till their methods were not two but one method, no more separable than the convexity and the concavity of a curve. In 1865, Pasteur began his five years' work on the infective diseases of silkworms : he took it in hand against his inclinations, and he carried it through, and brought back prosperity to the silk trade : he turned away loss from the cultivators, and starvation from the workers—*O Melibæe, deus nobis hæc otia fecit, Namque erit ille mihi semper deus*—and he won for himself insight into the facts of wound-infection. By 1875 he was demonstrating, in the Paris hospitals, the aseptic method. He, who was not a doctor, and had to screw up his courage to go round a hospital, and was made sick by the sight of an examination of the dead body, he was teaching the surgeons ; he was declaring, with a few words and a sketch on the blackboard, the nature of puerperal fever ; and the old learning began to pale its ineffectual fire, now that his genius was lighting the ways of practice.

Next to Lister and Pasteur, among the makers of modern surgery, comes Koch. His book on the infective diseases of wounds spread the new learning in Germany : besides, it was he who introduced the use of gelatin for the growing of germs in pure culture, and extended the use of Weigert's discovery, that germs can be stained with aniline dyes. Till the bacteriologists had these two methods, they could not go ahead : and Koch's earlier work, on wound-infections, is no less important than his later work on tubercle and malaria. By 1880, the genius of Pasteur had recreated, in every civilised country, the study of the infective diseases. *Novus rerum nascitur ordo* : the world, at last, was understanding its own infections : they were made visible under the microscope, independent of any life but their own. Here, under a man's eyes, in a man's hands, were the *contagia viva*, the *materies morbi*, the *particulare virus*—good-bye to these vague Latinities—here they were, the living agents of a disease, the thing itself, the real offender, isolated from the body, corked up in a test-tube, flourishing on a surface of sterilised gelatin. That is the wonder of Pasteur's work.

Genius, when it makes its abode, none too often, in the family-circle of the medical sciences, makes its presence felt by very plain speaking ; it surprises, and may even shock, these quiet sciences, by direct and vivid sentences, which break through accumulated theories like shafts of light through clouds, till they lift, and the sun comes out. So it is with Pasteur : his sayings have the simplicity

of his genius, and the air is cleared at the touch of them. For example, his answer to a foolish critic, solemn over a question that was wholly unimportant—*Si vous saviez comme tout cela m'est égal*. Again, when he drew on the blackboard, in 1878, at the French Academy of Medicine, the germs of puerperal fever—*Tenez, voici sa figure*. For truth of teaching, for downright thrill of novelty, these four words are unsurpassable. There is the same note of simplicity in Koch's account, in 1882, of his discovery of the germs of tubercle :—

Henceforth, in our warfare against this fearful scourge of our race, we have to reckon not with a nameless something, but with a definite bodily foe, whose conditions of life are for the most part already known, and can be further studied. *Before all things, we must shut off the sources of infection, so far as it is possible for man to do this.*

Thirteen years later, in 1895, in Roux's famous paper in the *Agenda du Chimiste*, the same note :—

See how far we have come, from the old metaphysical ideas about virulence, to these microbes which we can turn this or that way—*stuff so plastic that a man can work on it, and fashion it to his liking.*

These three golden sayings mark the three lines of advance in the fight against the infective diseases : and every medical student ought to know them by heart. Also, he ought to know the chief episodes of the long warfare, the dates of the decisive battles, and the names of the victorious generals. As Romanes wrote ' Darwin and After Darwin,' so we ought to have ' Pasteur and After Pasteur.' This delightful book would begin at 1857, with the isolating of the *bacillus lactis*. Three years later, Pasteur was making his final experiments, above Chamonix, on the exclusion of germs from putrescible fluids ; and Lister, not yet gone from Glasgow to Edinburgh, was sterilising cotton-wool dressings by heat. Three years more bring us to 1863, the date of Davaine's finding the germs of anthrax (splenic fever, malignant pustule, wool-sorter's disease). Before Davaine, men of science had seen these germs, and had imagined that they were some sort of ' blood-crystals ' ; Davaine recognised them for what they are. Anthrax, henceforth, began to be properly understood. From 1865 to 1870, Pasteur was working in Paris on ferments, and at Alais on the diseases of silkworms (*pébrine* and *flâcherie*) : the final proof of his success over these diseases was in the results obtained at Villa Vicentina, in 1870, just before the Franco-German War. Lister, during these five

years, 1865-1870, published his first paper on the antiseptic treatment of compound fractures; made his experiments in 1867 with the carbolised silk ligature, and in 1868 with the carbolised catgut ligature; and, about 1870, introduced the use of antiseptic gauze.

Next come Schroeter and Weigert, bringing 'honourable presents and of great value,' as Ambroise Paré called his fees. Schroeter, in 1872, discovered that germs could be made to grow, in pure culture, on solid media, such as slices of potato: and Weigert, in 1875, discovered the use of aniline dyes for the differential staining of germs. The years between 1876 and 1880 are the time of Pasteur's work on fowl-cholera, puerperal fever, and osteomyelitis; Sternberg's work on tetanus; and Laveran's discovery of the germs of malaria.

In 1881, more argosies of science came home. Pasteur presented to the French Academy his memoir on the protective treatment against anthrax; Koch, during the International Medical Congress in London, showed to some English doctors the germs of tubercle; Lister, at this Congress, suggested that wound-infection is due rather to direct contact than to germs suspended in the air; and, over in Havana, Finlay inoculated himself and other volunteers with mosquito-borne yellow fever.

In 1883, Koch discovered the 'comma-bacillus,' the cause of Asiatic cholera; in 1884, the germs of diphtheria, typhoid fever, and tetanus, were obtained in pure culture; in July 1885, Pasteur first used on a patient the protective treatment against rabies; in 1886, he first used the protective treatment against swine-erysipelas; in 1887, Bruce discovered the germs of Malta fever.

In 1890, Behring and Kitasato published their discovery that animals can be immunised, as against anthrax and rabies, so against diphtheria and tetanus: really, there ought to be 'National Thanksgivings' for discoveries of this magnitude. In the winter, in Berlin, came the grievous disappointment over the first use of tuberculin. Happily, at the present time, with the fuller knowledge which has been gained since 1890, the use of tuberculin is giving good results, in more ways than one.

Henceforth, the work so widened, that a mere list of the doings of the pathologists is of no value at all. In 1893, came the inestimable blessing of diphtheria-antitoxin, Haffkine's protective treatment against Asiatic cholera, and tetanus-antitoxin; in 1894, Yersin and Kitasato discovered the plague-bacillus: in 1895, Bruce's work on nagana (tsetse-fly disease of animals); in 1896,

Wright's protective treatment against typhoid fever; in 1897, Haffkine's protective treatment against plague; in 1898, Ross's work on bird-malaria; in 1900, the self-experiments of Sambon and Low, Manson and Warren, and the volunteers during the American Commission in Havana: these self-experiments proved, for all time, the mosquito-theory of malaria and of yellow fever. But what is the good of this list? The story, to be told properly, requires not a list, but a book. In 1903, Bruce set to work on sleeping sickness (tsetse-fly disease in man, trypanosomiasis); in 1904-5 he traced the infection of Malta fever to the goats' milk. In 1907 came Flexner's work on epidemic meningitis, and in 1908 his antitoxin for that disease; in 1910, his work on epidemic infantile paralysis and Ehrlich's work on '606.' Last year came the compulsory use, in the United States Army, of the protective treatment against typhoid fever: this year, in our own country, the compulsory notification of consumption.

All these life-saving discoveries, and many more, have been won for men and animals through Pasteur's work, and have been given to them, as it were, by his hands and on his advice. He treated mankind and the animal creation; he healed not cases, but nations; and the whole earth is his patient, enjoying, thanks to him, a marked improvement in its general health.

Take the rough, doubtless inaccurate, list of these discoveries. See how it illustrates the three golden sayings. 1. *Tenez, voici sa figure: There, that's what it's like.* The living agents of the disease are discovered in the blood and the tissues of a case of that disease: they are cultivated, outside the body, in pure culture, in test-tubes: and the disease is reproduced, in small animals, with this pure culture. The disease itself is bottled; is visible, under the microscope; takes this or that aniline stain; has its likes and dislikes, its tendencies and habits; behaves in this or that way towards heat and cold, light and darkness, air and no air. 2. *We must shut off the sources of infection.* Illustrations of this saying are the notification of consumption, the testing of the milk-supply, the tuberculin-test for cattle, and the mallein-test for the diagnosis of glanders; the prohibition of goat's milk to our garrisons in Malta and Gibraltar; the antiseptic and aseptic method of surgery; the Muzzling Act, and quarantine of dogs; the destruction of rats in time of plague; the bringing down of malaria and yellow fever by 'anti-mosquito' methods; the bringing down of sleeping sickness—and so forth. 3. *Stuff so plastic that a man can work on it.* Not only can he bottle

diseases, but he can standardise them, and prepare, from these standards, his antitoxins and vaccines. Illustrations here are diphtheria-antitoxin, tetanus-antitoxin, Flexner's serum-treatment of epidemic meningitis, Sclavo's serum-treatment of anthrax in man, Shiga's serum-treatment of dysentery; the tuberculin-treatment in cases of consumption; the uses of vaccine-therapy; the protective treatments against rabies, cholera, typhoid fever, plague, rinderpest, distemper, anthrax in sheep and cattle, swine-erysipelas—and so forth.

See, by these instances, how the genius of Pasteur inspires all workers for the health of man and of animals. But, if we could look a hundred years ahead, will his kingdom endure? Will he still dominate medical and surgical practice, and preventive medicine, and State medicine?

The answer surely is, that Pasteur's work will abide, in authority, crowned and enthroned, till the day comes when a man shall be able to receive under his skin, without hurt, a needleful of the germs of tetanus, plague, or anthrax, in pure culture, at full virulence. There is no sign of that day's coming. Hitherto, the work is done along the lines which Pasteur laid down: it is the extension, not the dissolution, of his kingdom; not the death, but the development, of his teaching. *Il faut travailler*, he would say, again and again, toward the end of his life at the Institute. He was past work: it was that last summer, when they put a tent for him, in the grounds of the Institute, under the trees, and from time to time one of the younger men might go and talk to him. Last of all, he was moved to Villefranche, where are the meadows and farms and stables for the animals used for preparing antitoxins; there he died: but where does his work not live? The fight against plague and cholera in India, rinderpest in the Transvaal, malaria and yellow fever in the Panama Zone, sleeping sickness in the Uganda Protectorate, is fought in his name. He made a way to the saving of hundreds of thousands of human lives. He made a way to the saving of sheep and cattle and horses and dogs and swine and poultry. Back, down the scale of creation, we go in thought, the way he came; and find everywhere the meaning of his life, till we are back at mathematics and physics, which he taught to the boys at the College of Besançon, when he was seventeen, for 300 francs a year and his board and lodging.

STEPHEN PAGET.

'JOHN HONORIUS.'

BY HIS HONOUR JUDGE PARRY.

'Anyone can eat, but how few know how to dine.'

'The Sayings of John Honorius,' 1685.

IF there be such a volume as 'The Sayings of John Honorius,' of which I have my doubts, it is a rare book. There is no copy of it in the British Museum, and you will not find its title in the pages of the catalogue of the Rylands' Library. That there is or was such a book, and that it was alleged by that strange being who took the name of John Honorius to have been published in 1685, rests, as far as I am concerned, upon the narration of Colonel Roland Black-Brooks, who, when the so-called John Honorius left his household, set down in the form of military despatches all he could remember of the sayings and movements of that strange personality. He also drew up a careful précis of the circumstances which preceded the advent of John Honorius to 'The Turrets,' which I have found of the greatest value.

Colonel Black, who had served in India, married Ethel Brooks, daughter of John Brooks, the North Lancashire spinner. The Colonel attached the name of Brooks to his own with a hyphen and a fortune. When old John died his business was turned into a limited company, and the Colonel sat on the board to represent the Black-Brooks debentures, which were the financial backbone of the concern. Old Brooks had died about ten years after their marriage, and it was soon afterwards that they bought 'The Turrets,' and Mrs. Black-Brooks went to live there.

'The Turrets' was a romantic old gabled farmhouse added to and patched as it passed from agricultural to residential uses, and nearly spoiled by an early Victorian wool-comber who had planted two sham turrets at either end of the walled garden, with little summer-houses in each upper storey from which you could watch the tides creeping over the sands of Morecambe Bay until the last little wave rolled lazily over at the turrets' foot. At that time the place was called 'Cocker Lane End,'

or merely 'Cockers,' and the name of 'The Turrets' began with the wool-comber. Artistic possessors of the place sneered at these little turrets and their Philistine builder, and threatened their removal, but learning from local sources the former name of 'Cockers' allowed them to remain in the interests of social phonetics. Mrs. Black-Brooks had the same feeling about them at first, but now afternoon tea was always served in one in fine weather and the other had become her own boudoir and studio.

Ethel Brooks was old-fashioned enough to write long letters detailing the every-day life of 'The Turrets' in a vivid manner. It is from some of these letters dated from 'My Turret' and written to her cousin Mrs. Lakin, of Bacup, and kindly lent to me by permission, that I have gathered many interesting facts about John Honorius.

At the time of which I write, Colonel Black-Brooks was certainly fifty years old, and his wife considerably his junior. The Colonel visited 'The Turrets' for long week-ends, imagining that he had business in Manchester or Burnley during the week. The rest of the household consisted of Marion, as Mrs. Black-Brooks called her dear old Lancashire Mary Ann, who had been an under-nurse in old John Brooks' household, and who had gone away with Ethel as her maid on her marriage tour; Gertrude, an intelligent little orphan girl of fifteen, taken from a home by Mrs. Black-Brooks to be trained as a servant, and already, according to Marion, 'showing willing'; and last John Evans, a dull, ignorant, soldier fellow whose army character was only 'good' without any laudatory adjectives. He was an experiment of the Colonel's, intended to drive the dog-cart and wait at table, both of which he did indifferently. At the lodge, at the other end of the fields where the occupation road that led to the house joined the old Lancashire toll-road, lived deaf Grindle the gardener, and Jane his fat daughter, who walked through the part of housemaid and understudied the part of cook at occasional matinées.

Also on May 15, 1904, there was a cook.

Colonel and Mrs. Black-Brooks had then been at 'The Turrets' for twelve months, and the order of the succession of the cooks was this: The first was Emma, who retired hurt at the Colonel's language concerning the smell of burned milk. She was succeeded by Mrs. Honor—character to follow—who on the second day was found drunk and on fire in the kitchen and

put out by the military in the shape of John Evans. There are two pages in the Colonel's précis detailing this operation, which seems to have been a brilliant affair. Then Jane of the Lodge 'obliged' for three weeks, and the Colonel went to London. Miss Gladys Hartly, of the School of Cookery, a lady-cook, arrived and the Colonel returned to 'The Turrets.' I find in the Colonel's précis under this date the words: 'Seven smiling halcyon days of well-cooked entrées, but coffee weak.' Matrimony claimed Gladys. A fiancé, with a sudden rise of salary, sailed down from Birmingham and bore her away gloriously in his arms. There is a very able algebraic calculation by the Colonel comparing the cost of the materials of seven entrées with the young man's weekly salary. The result works out $-x$. After this we read: 'Ethel followed Gladys, and Mary Jane followed Ethel and Mrs. Wilcox followed Mary Jane and Jane from the Lodge "obliged,"' Then the Colonel went abroad. When he returned Jane was still obliging except on Sundays, when her young man from Cronkshaw's farm obliged her not to oblige. Then they had cold beef and *pâté de foie gras* for lunch and the Colonel mixed a salad, and for evening supper Marion and the orphan collaborated over a dish of bacon and eggs. The Colonel was loud in his praise of the simple life and homely diet, and washed it down, as the old writers say, with Pommery and Greno 1892. Next Sunday it palled on his appetite, and the third Sunday he declared they must have a cook. Ethel smiled a wan smile at the word 'must.' But the Colonel took the matter in hand—the volume of official correspondence is in existence and consists of three hundred and fifty-four quarto pages. The triumphant result was, Mrs. Jackson, with a four years' character, at a salary of 42*l*. She arrived on May 14, and that was how it came about that on May 15 they had a cook.

May 14 was a Thursday and there was a terrible storm. The waves beat up against the garden wall and Mrs. Jackson, being a town-dweller, was terribly frightened. In the morning it was still very wet, but things calmed down a bit, and although Mrs. Jackson was quite unfit for work yet she breakfasted quietly in bed, and, as it were, remained under protest and without prejudice. All would have gone well, no doubt, had it not happened that on coming downstairs just before tea-time much rested and refreshed, Mrs. Jackson unfortunately nearly trod on a rat asleep on the attic stairs. As the Colonel tried to explain

to the unreasoning woman in the pauses of her hysterics, there were no rats in the house and never had been; and this must have been a rat that had strayed in from the stables. Whatever her culinary qualities, which the unfortunate Colonel never tested, Mrs. Jackson had certainly not the judicial mind. Evidence and argument were unavailing. She packed her trunk and walked away to Lancaster. Later in the day a cab came for the trunk. The Colonel drove over to the railway hotel at Morecambe to meet a friend. The friend was not there but he had dinner. When he returned he told Ethel she had better try and find a cook whilst he was in Manchester. The word 'must' had departed from his vocabulary.

The Colonel went away next morning and his wife sent an advertisement to the 'Times,' 'Morning Post,' 'Daily Telegraph,' and other papers. There was a touch of pathos in it.

It ran:—'Wanted at once. A cook. Man or woman. No reasonable salary refused. At once. Black-Brooks, The Turrets, Near Lancaster.'

The advertisement was in the papers the following Wednesday.

It was a fine sunny morning and Mrs. Black-Brooks was in 'My Turret' writing letters. The little green waves were running over the golden sands towards the star-grass and the sea-pinks. Larks were circling up shouting their songs and planing down into the long grass beyond the sand-hills towards eligible sites for nests. Ethel often told me that there was something supernatural that morning in the wonderful joy of life in the air and the sun and the sea and the earth and the live things that moved and waved and spread themselves rejoicing in the light of Heaven. She felt that there was a message for her.

But the message, though it was on its way, came not across the sands and the sea. It came in the common brown envelope that has brought countless messages of births and deaths and joys and sorrows to so many of mankind, and it was carried by little Gertrude the orphan, waving it in her hand and gaily dancing between the tulip beds singing a song she had heard her mistress sing.

The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn:
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world!

For this seemed to her natural mind to fit in perfectly to the hum and the songs and the scents of the garden she was in. And she ran up the stairs of 'My Turret' and, not forgetting the taught knock, burst into the room with joyful excitement.

'A telegram, Mistress.'

And Mrs. Black-Brooks read it with silent astonishment and then read it again, this time aloud to the little orphan.

'Accept situation. Be of good cheer. I come. John Honorius.'

She looked at the paper. It had been handed in at Bristol 10.30. The little orphan stood waiting her orders.

'Tell Marion to give the telegraph-boy half-a-crown,' said her mistress, '—and say—no, say nothing. What do you think it means, Gertrude?'

'It sounds to me, Ma'am, as though some one very nice indeed was coming,' said the little orphan in her simple way. And as she ran singing across the garden back to the house, Ethel thankfully remembered texts about truth and prophecy and little children that gave her great hope.

It was a dark evening, a sea mist was driving over the sands from the south-west. Mrs. Black-Brooks was seated in her low drawing-room by the fire—a comfortable companion for any month you please in the North country—the lamp was lit, the curtains drawn, and a book lay open in her lap.

There had been but a frugal supper. A woman's meat in the absence of her lord is a thing of naught. John Honorius in the Sayings writes, 'The hunger of woman is only to be appeased by clothes.' And again: 'If women ate as bravely as they dressed they would be nearer to friendship with man.'

But to-night Mrs. Black-Brooks could not read, for on every printed page the only words she saw were, 'Be of good cheer. I come. John Honorius.' Again and again her eyes and mind wandered out of the story of the author into her own story, and at length she had dropped the volume on her knees and was listening to the moan of the wind outside and the clatter of plates and dishes in the kitchen which Marion and the little orphan were diligently washing up to the time and tune of 'A few more years shall roll.'

The hymn tune ceased with the work done, the moan of the wind coming in from the sea stole through the curtains, when suddenly 'Mickle,' the Colonel's black Aberdeen terrier—his

mother was the famous 'Muckle'—jumped out of his sleep on the hearth-rug and threw his head back with frantic barks. At the same moment the door-bell rang. It was a noisy bell as a rule, but the visitor, whoever he was, had a soft hand and now it merely tinkled in the back hall. 'Mickle' ceased to bark and he and his mistress listened eagerly.

Visitors were rare at 'The Turrets' at such an hour. Marion went to the door and opened it narrowly with curiosity, tempered perhaps by fear. In the rain was an old man rather under middle height with deep-set eyes below shaggy white eyebrows, a wealth of white hair and a trimmed beard. At his feet was a Gladstone bag and a huge framed picture uncovered, a colour print of the Infant Samuel, whilst underneath his left arm he carried a fiddle-case. In his right hand he held an ample black soft felt hat, and a long black Belgian-hooded cloak fell from his shoulders almost to his feet.

'Eh mon!' cried Marion in her best Mary Ann Lancashire, which always found her in her moments of surprise. 'Eh mon! Wher' dost think thi art coomin' to this time o' neet?'

'I am John Honorius,' said the man, gravely raising his brown eyes and looking with kindly command at Marion. 'Bring me to the mistress, Mrs. Black-Brooks.'

Crossing the hall he laid down the fiddle-case, placed the Infant Samuel carefully against the wall and threw back his cloak. He was neatly dressed in that peculiar grey suiting known as pepper and salt—'the mufti of cooks' as it is called in the Sayings.

Marion threw open the drawing-room door. Mrs. Black-Brooks and 'Mickle' came forward to meet the visitor.

'Peace be to this home!' he said in a low voice.

Mrs. Black-Brooks put out her hand in greeting.

'Are you the new cook?' she asked with a puzzled smile.

He took her hand in his and bent his head reverently to kiss it lightly.

'If you will be my mistress I will serve you with the little knowledge that I have.'

'Mickle' sniffed a short tour round each of his trouser legs and then threw himself upon his mat with a grunt of satisfaction. A moment afterwards 'Mickle' snored. There was clearly no need to ask the stranger for a character. Ethel proudly led the way to the kitchen and introduced her new cook

to Marion, John Evans, and the orphan. Then she went back to her drawing-room a proud woman with a glad heart; a woman in whose household there was a cook.

And that evening John Honorius took up the reins of government in 'The Turrets,' and by reason and persuasion and the awe that is inspired by holiness, entered into his kingdom. And his first act was to extend the bounds of Evans' usefulness in a way that surprised that sturdy military failure, who in his army discipline had never met with a Gordon or a Napoleon whose rule was the spirit of love. It arose in this way. The orphan had placed the cold mutton for supper on the table and John Honorius noticed that the dish was not decorated with parsley. This caused him to say in a serious vein, 'It is well observed by John Russell in the Book of Nurture or some other volume of ancient date—you will find the quotation in the sayings of my great ancestor—"that the garnish of the kitchen should equal the garnish of the hall so that the fangles of courtesy become a habit as well as a duty."' Mr. Evans therefore will go into the garden and bring us parsley.'

Mr. Evans, however, had been down in the village and was not in a responsive mood. He expressed his preference for a sojourn among the supernatural terrors of the underworld rather than a voyage to the parsley-bed. John Honorius continued the argument in a mild voice, smiling at Evans over the joined tips of his fingers which supported his chin.

'The reasons urging and even compelling Mr. Evans to oblige us in this little matter are two. The first is that Mr. Evans is an English soldier and a gentleman'—a deprecatory grunt from Evans—'an English soldier and a gentleman I repeat, and therefore always ready to be at the service of lovely woman'—a graceful sweep of his hand included Marion and the orphan—Evans chuckled—'ready also to assist those veterans of the war of life, who, like myself, have the privilege to ask services now that formerly it was their privilege to render.'

Marion and the orphan looked on open-mouthed. John Evans laughed in coarse derision—and used language unfit for orphan ears.

And upon this John Honorius sprang up and walking to the fellow with folded arms stared into his eyes muttering rapidly but with suppressed power in his whispers: 'There is another

reason why the man Evans will go and do what is right, and that is because to-night he is not a gentleman but a cur and a coward and has muddled his brains with drink until he has lost control of himself, but I, John Honorius, am his master and he knows it and knows he must obey and at once, at once. Do you hear, sir? Parsley! Parsley!'

John Honorius threw his arms out and held his fingers pointing to the door. And poor Evans, completely dazed, his eyes set staring in his head and his stagnant mind overpowered by the other's strong will, wandered out into the night in search of parsley.

'And now, madam,' he said turning to Marion—he always called her madam and the orphan he named Ariel. 'And now, madam, let me give you the result of a life's experience about the potato. True you have boiled them to perfection. But to perfection let us add perfection. Let me pour off the water. So! Now let us leave them where they are, throwing some salt lightly in them thus, and moving the lid of your pan ever so little for our steam to escape. So!'

He pursed his lips and put his head on one side and bowed gravely to Marion.

'Madam is from Lancashire, and there you may preach strange truths and welcome. In twenty minutes, and not a second before, they will be due for the refreshment of mankind. Remember the saying: "The potato without patience is pulp."'

He sat watching the steam come from the lid of the pan, and apparently did not notice the arrival of Evans with the parsley, nor the dainty garnishing of the dish by little Gertrude. His mind was in the pan with the potatoes as is the way with your great artists. Suddenly he rose, pulled out a pair of white kid gloves and hastily drew them on. Seizing a wooden bowl from the dresser and a clean napkin from the press, he lifted the lid off the pan and reverently placed each potato in a nest of soft linen.

'Now we can have supper, little Ariel,' he said, pinching her ear playfully and nodding his approval of the parsley decorations. And he stood at the end of the table and folding his hands looked round until the others were standing too. Evans rose without a murmur—and then John Honorius chanted in a simple monotone:

'Give thanks to God with one accord
For that shall be set on this board.'

Little Gertrude looked puzzled at this new grace, but John Honorius assured her by saying, 'I will teach you a new grace for every day of the month, Ariel. And why not? There is a wise saying in an old book. "It is ill thanking Providence for fresh food in stale phrases."' "

The next morning Ethel woke with a light heart. Little Gertrude brought in her morning tea. The tray was decorated with one beautiful rose, and the bread and butter was as thin as the wing of a moth.

'That is sweet of you, Gertrude,' she said—smiling her thanks for the rose.

Gertrude blushed in unison with the flower.

'It was the master's thought,' she said. She already called him the master, 'and he says I shall cut thinner bread and butter than he can in a few weeks.'

The little orphan proudly drew forth a dainty card from the breast of her apron.

'This is the breakfast menu, madam,' she said, handing it to her mistress.

There were eight dishes to choose from; each described in most elegant French with an English equivalent in brackets. Mrs. Black-Brooks knew that at least three of the dishes were impossible and came to the conclusion that John Honorius was either suffering from insanity or impertinence. Woman-like she chose *Merlans aux fines herbes*, and *omelette aux champignons*, for she was well aware that there were neither whittings nor mushrooms in the house nor any obtainable, as she thought, within at least three miles of 'The Turrets.' She laughed whilst she was dressing to think of the discomfiture of John Honorius, and imagined for him unsatisfactory excuses.

John Honorius, in his spotless white robe of a chef, carried in the merlans and introduced them to his mistress with courtly ceremony. The champignons delicately hidden in folds of a perfect omelette were of the freshest.

It appeared that John Honorius was in touch with a pilot at Sunderland Point two miles away, whose boy had brought over the fish early in the morning, and in crossing the fields near Cronkshaw's farm, had found a few early mushrooms which he had carried to 'The Turrets,' prompted by the genius of boyhood. These miracles became daily commonplaces during the reign of John Honorius.

It was directly after breakfast that Ethel wired to her husband in Manchester. 'Come home at once. I have a cook.' And Roland replied 'Home to dinner to-night.' For in spite of his constant absences Colonel Black-Brooks dearly loved his wife and was not averse to his home when there was any prospect of getting a decent meal there. Joy ran through the household when they heard that the Colonel was coming home, and down on the sea-shore surrounded by whirring sea-gulls John Honorius paced the sands fiddling to the waves 'The Wedding March.'

The dog-cart was to leave 'The Turrets' to meet the train at five o'clock, but at that hour Marion brought word that Evans was not to be found. John Honorius, fearing disaster, went out in search. The stable was a hundred yards or so from the house. It was a four-stalled stable with two loose boxes. In one box was the Colonel's grey cob and in the other was his groom. The former was sober and awake. John Honorius shook his head and went up to the cob and patted him. Then he went into the other box and looked at the man and turned him over with his foot. Then he strode into the house and explained that Evans was unfit for work and offered to drive into Lancaster and meet the Colonel himself. With tears in her eyes, Mrs. Black-Brooks accepted his suggestion.

'But the dinner?' she exclaimed, 'the dinner.'

'All that was planned can scarcely be achieved, but much may be done,' said John Honorius. 'We must trust our roast ducks to Madam and Ariel. The latter has a gift for basting. True basting is really a wrist movement, but many ladies born with the capacity for this useful branch of art waste their powers on golf. As for the fish I shall be in time myself. We drop our *entrée de bœuf* and substitute *Rognons au vin blanc*. There is not a suitable cauliflower in the garden, but I have a drive four miles and I will search through Lancaster and, if within this radius there are cauliflowers worthy to be cast for the part, I will show you *Choux-fleurs à la vraie barigoule*. It is my own dish. The French deny the rite of *barigoule* to any vegetable but the artichoke. Some day they will learn my modifications and be wise. It is in times of stress that a warrior is happy. Be of good cheer, mistress, I and my cauliflowers will return.'

With these brave words did John Honorius cheer his mistress and himself, and the remaining half hour was spent in harnessing the cob, giving minute details to Marion and Ariel

as to the beginnings of the work in the kitchen, and adjusting himself into Evans' livery coat and hat so as to look as little as possible like a Guy Fawkes.

'Who on earth are you?' asked the Colonel as he came out of the station door and found John Honorius standing at the head of the cob in Evans' coat, which nearly trailed in the dust. 'Who on earth are you?' he repeated—but he did not say 'earth.'

'John Honorius, sir,' replied the master, touching Evans' hat, which was kept off the bridge of his nose by his shaggy eyebrows. 'The new cook. Your man John Evans is indisposed.'

'I know what you mean. Indisposed, the scoundrel. He wants six months' hard labour, that's what he wants.'

The Colonel seldom drove himself, so he sat reading the evening paper whilst John Honorius threaded his way through the town and then away to the north, round by Mr. Bertram's garden, where he drew up and asked the Colonel's permission to get down.

'Where on earth have we got to now?' cried the Colonel, putting down his paper.

'I have to call here for two cauliflowers.'

'Two miles out of our way just for two cauliflowers, well I'll be——'

'No, no, sir!' said John Honorius, just stopping him in time, 'by no means. In fact if the cauliflowers are what I expect quite otherwise.'

He disappeared into the garden, leaving the Colonel fretting and fuming, and gradually making up his mind that he would rather be driven by Evans drunk than John Honorius sober. After five minutes John Honorius appeared wreathed in smiles. 'I have found two,' he whispered excitedly.

'Well, hurry up with them,' said the Colonel sharply.

'They are being packed,' said John Honorius, 'and the gardener has gone to the house for some tissue-paper.'

'Tissue-paper. Cauliflowers!' shouted the Colonel. 'Well, I'll be——'

And the Colonel did say it this time and snatched up the reins and drove away.

When the basket of cauliflowers was brought out by the gardener he found John Honorius leaning against the garden-

wall looking at his watch. Even his cheerful countenance had a cloud over it.

'Where is the Colonel?' asked the gardener.

John Honorius pointed to the dog-cart disappearing over the long hill.

'What has happened?'

'It is well said,' replied John Honorius solemnly, 'that "the fool who leaves the cook by the wayside throws his dinner into the gutter." But though he deserves nothing I have promised the mistress, and I must be there to serve the dinner.'

'Where?' asked the gardener.

'At "The Turrets."'

'Impossible.'

'Hark!'

A cloud of dust the size of a man's hand came along the road from the south, and with it the buzz of a motor. John Honorius stepped into the middle of the road and threw his arms up. The chauffeur, who was alone, pulled up with difficulty.

'I want your help,' he cried. 'It is a matter of life and—well, I will say life, nothing else. But I and that basket must reach "The Turrets" in a quarter of an hour.'

The chauffeur pushed up his goggles and stood up in the car.

'Why it's John Honorius,' he cried with delight. 'Don't you remember meeting me when you came to the Castle of Stroba in the Isle of Mull? I was valet there to Lord Cuticle. My word! you taught them how to run a kitchen.'

'It must be James,' said John Honorius, taking him by the hand. 'Do you remember what I taught you about sausages?'

'Do I remember, Mr. Honorius? Why it was my cooking those sausages that finished it.'

'Finished what?'

'Both of us. You remember Alice the housemaid. I met her again in London at a Mrs. Carpenter's. We had a sort of picnic supper and I cooked the sausages as you had taught me.'

'Well!'

'Alice took two—and the same night she took me. I never see a sausage without laughing. But jump in, I'll drive you anywhere, sir. Where to, Mr. Honorius?'

'To Colonel Black-Brooks, "The Turrets."'

The dinner was a great success. Each dish surpassed the

other, and after the cauliflowers *vraie barigoule*, the Colonel felt that right action demanded that the just word of regret should be spoken.

When John Honorius brought in some hot-house strawberries that he had also found at Bertram’s garden, the Colonel bowed to him and said :

‘Mr. Honorius, I feel that in leaving you somewhat abruptly at Mr. Bertram’s garden door I made a mistake. I desire to apologise—’

‘I cannot allow it, sir, for a moment. I remember the saying “Good service consists in forgetting the things that ought not to have happened!”’

‘Wise words, Mr. Honorius; there are not many who would give such a kindly answer.’

‘In the sayings of my great ancestor it is written that—
“It is a servant’s duty to answer nothing—but—the bell.”’

As John Honorius withdrew the Colonel poured out another glass of port.

‘The man is as mad as a hatter, Ethel; who is he?’

‘John Honorius.’

‘Where does he come from; who is he?’

‘Why should we trouble, darling? It’s enough for me that he is our new cook.’

And from the kitchen and through the hall came the sad sounds of ‘The Ash Grove,’ by means of which John Honorius on his fiddle was melting the repentant Evans into tears at the mixed thoughts of his folly, his headache, and the memory of his home and his mother crooning the melody to him over a Welsh cradle.

The days lengthened into weeks only to exhibit in greater fullness the skill and resources of John Honorius. Each member of the household had endeavoured in his or her way to solve the mystery of this strange being but to no purpose. The Colonel had a theory that he had lost his memory and did not himself know who he was. And as John Honorius resolutely refused to discuss the question of salary until, as he said, ‘My month’s trial is at an end,’ the Colonel became more than ever gravely unconvinced about his state of mind.

It is curious how the saintly character that draws round it the worship of all right natures rouses in the small and envious mind hatred and a desire to destroy. Evans never forgave

John Honorius his power over him, even although he knew that the good man only used it for his higher interests. But the Caliban in him made him wish for John Honorius all the infections that the sun sucks up, and his narrow soul resented the peace and sweet reasonableness that John Honorius had brought with him to 'The Turrets.' He ventured one day to hint his suspicions to the Colonel, saying that in his view he would 'guess 'e'd done something 'e didn't ought,' and there were doubtless 'them looking for 'im as would give 'im a 'ome for many a long year if they could lay their 'ands on 'im.'

The hint sank into the Colonel's mind. It was not without reason. Why indeed did John Honorius remain in this out-of-the-way spot?

The Colonel felt that he must insist upon John Honorius satisfying him of his respectability, and would do so directly after dinner. But the *poulet à la Marengo* drove all such thoughts from his mind. Napoleon himself never met a more convincing casserole. And to see John Honorius in his white robes of office place it upon the board with a smile of triumph and lift the lid with the cheerfulness of a giver of good gifts, was to know that the man was no criminal or, if indeed he was one, was so great an artist that all might be forgiven him for the sake of his art.

The Colonel had nearly forgotten Evans' suspicions, when the next morning he opened his newspaper at breakfast and a horrible story of murder shouted its sickening details from the head lines of several columns.

'What day did Honorius arrive here?' asked the Colonel anxiously.

'On the 20th,' replied his wife.

'And did the telegram come from Bristol?'

'Yes, dear.'

The Colonel folded up the paper and turned pale. The murder had taken place at Bristol. The body had been discovered in an empty house and the deceased was last seen alive on the morning of the 17th in the company of an old gentleman, whose description the police expected to issue shortly. The Colonel carried the newspaper into his study and there hunted up the telegram received from John Honorius, which in his military way he had kept and docketed, and the more he conned

the dates and facts, the more certain became his fear that it could not be all mere coincidence. Later in the morning when the London newspapers arrived, there was a more detailed account, with a description of the wanted man, and in one of the papers a rough portrait. The Colonel looked at it in trembling horror. There was the slightly curved nose, the beard, the eyebrows. Bad as the portrait was, it was sufficiently like to satisfy the Colonel that the man who was wanted was no other than John Honorius.

The Sergeant in charge of the district lived within three-quarters of a mile of 'The Turrets,' and taking the newspaper with him, the Colonel sought the aid of the police.

The Sergeant was one of those excellent officers who regard all men as potential criminals with the possible exception of magistrates, magistrates' clerks, and brother policemen. He had already seen John Honorius playing his fiddle among the sand-hills. Not perhaps in itself a criminal offence, but certainly conduct pertaining to the rogue and vagabond rather than the honest ratepayer. It had stamped John Honorius in the Sergeant's mind with a brand more dangerous than guilt—suspicion. Having read the accounts of the crime and heard the Colonel's story and compared dates, he came to the conclusion that here was the wanted man, and the sooner he was arrested the better.

It was mid-day when they returned to 'The Turrets.' John Honorius was in the kitchen instructing Mrs. Black-Brooks in the art of making nougat. The orphan was preparing a dish for lunch and Marion was shelling the first early peas. Into this kitchen of content entered the Sergeant and Colonel Black-Brooks.

'What is the matter, Roland?' cried his wife, who saw the agitation her husband could not control.

'Hush, dear! The Sergeant must do his duty.'

John Honorius brushed the flour from the tips of his fingers and smiled amiably at the Sergeant who stepped towards him.

'I arrest you on suspicion of being Isaac Summerhill, who is wanted for the Bristol murder.'

'I have never been in Bristol in my life,' said John Honorius.

'But the telegram,' gasped Ethel.

John Honorius hung his head and the Sergeant, quick to

note the confirmatory lie, snapped the handcuffs on his man, saying, 'I have seen the telegram.'

The little orphan burst into a passion of tears. 'I know he's innocent,' she cried. And she would have clung to him, but Marion led her aside to the window and soothed her with kind words.

'This must be ended,' said John Honorius with simple dignity. 'I do not blame you, Sergeant, but I fear your superiors will. Is Colonel Sharston still Chief Constable here?'

'He is already on his way,' said the Sergeant.

But for the tact and charming manners of John Honorius it would have been a most uncomfortable quarter of an hour. He alone remained calm and unruffled, sitting with his linked hands resting on the table in front of him and talking placidly and beautifully about food and cookery.

'I regret very much, Mrs. Black-Brooks, that this little trouble should have occurred in your house where I have received such great kindness. But in any case I could not have stayed more than a few days longer. I hope I have been of some use to this household and that little Ariel will be able to carry on the good work which I have begun. You must give a kindly thought sometimes to John Honorius and his teachings. And I would not have anyone believe that the truths it is my life work to preach are doctrines likely to lead away the mind from higher thoughts. On the contrary, if I am right, they are the most necessary to clear thinking and right action. I have tried to model my daily life on the teachings of the Scripture. I nowhere find food spoken of in the Holy Book with disrespect, and the greatest miracles and most beautiful mysteries are linked with the daily necessities of food and drink. And what I have sought to impress upon you all is that dining means not only stoking the human body, but so stoking it that it shall manufacture the maximum of steam and the minimum of black smoke. And in the cookery and preparing of food there are at every time opportunities for courtesy and unselfishness to others, and the charm of exercising technical skill in the practice of a great art. And these are not my own thoughts but may be found in that wonderful book "The Sayings of John Honorius."'

The Sergeant was scribbling all this down in his note-book and making no great sense of it, I fear.

'I wish you would stop a bit, my man,' he said gruffly; 'it's

all going down, you know, and will be used in evidence against you.'

'Be it so,' said John Honorius with dignity, and continued his discourse. 'With regard to the picture of the Infant Samuel, I wish little Ariel to keep that.' The little orphan blushed her gratitude. 'As I have often told her, the Infant Samuel is typical of service, continually alert to answer the bell as we may say, and which of us can tell who is ringing for us or when we are to be called or why we are wanted?'

'We know why you are wanted anyhow,' grumbled the Sergeant.

'Even that is a matter in which error is possible. And as, my careful and friendly officer, it is your duty apparently to take down all I say let me give you words of wisdom suited to your estate. I remember your garden well. In it you might grow lettuces. Do so. By all means do so. I have shown old Grindle how to tie lettuces and further how to grow watercress which will flourish in a garden if not grown in the sun. He will teach you all that, and little Ariel will teach you how to mix your salad when it is grown. And let me tell you this of the watercress, which is known to few——'

What this may have been is regrettably lost, for here the policeman's note breaks off. The arrival of the Chief Constable ended the discourse. As Colonel Sharston came into the kitchen the Sergeant stood at salute, the women started up breathless with excitement, John Honorius looked round with a pleasant smile.

'Sharston, you mustn't blame the Sergeant, but please tell him to release me.'

The Chief Constable stepped towards him, with a smile of recognition, and was greeting him by name when John Honorius stopped him.

'Hush! I am John Honorius among my friends here, as I was when you first met me. You remember the toasted cheese?'

The Sergeant had lost no time in freeing his wrists, and Colonel Sharston, with tears in his eyes, seized his hands with affection and regret.

'Remember the cheese!' he said reverently. 'I have never since lived in a house without a Wensleydale.'

'Good!' cried John Honorius, patting him lovingly on the

shoulder. 'It is well to see the true faith steadfast in the outer corners of the world.'

The Sergeant was beginning the humblest of apologies. Colonel Black-Brooks stammered out words of the deepest sorrow, the women turned their faces to him for forgiveness and read it smiling on all of them in his mild brown eyes.

'For,' said he, 'a man who goes masquerading in a strange name, and sends telegrams from a place he has never been to, to cover up his tracks, deserves to find the trouble he is looking for. This little indignity I have suffered has been the reward of my own deceit. That deceit I committed in the hopes of bringing peace into this household; and now my holiday is over, my mission is ended and I must be gone.'

'And may we not know,' asked Mrs. Black-Brooks, 'the name of our guest?'

'I am to you and the world John Honorius the missionary. When I read in the "Times" the cry of despair of the household wanting a cook that is a call into the field. There are countless others who want me and my duty is to be alert for service, waiting for the next call, ready to save yet another household from culinary misery and degradation. If I have brought something of the joy and content of good cooking into your household—Well. But one thing I know I have done. I have instilled into the heart of little Ariel the true faith and belief which alone can make the kitchen a chapel of holy endeavour.'

He stooped down and kissed the little girl upon the brow. She burst into tears.

'You will be gentle at first with Ariel, Colonel,' he said, taking his hand for the first time to bid him farewell.

Colonel Black-Brooks sniffed and nodded and muttered invitations to stay, but John Honorius shook his head.

'My kind mistress has, I am sure, forgiven my trespasses and is assured of the good-will of the trespasser.'

Ethel could not trust herself to speak but pressed his hand to convey her thanks. They followed him into the hall and helped him on with his cloak. He insisted on carrying the Gladstone-bag and the fiddle-case.

'As I came so I depart,' he said. 'Peace be to this home.'

He walked rapidly across the garden towards the toll-road. At the gate he set down his bag for a moment to wave his hand to the watchers at the door. Then he disappeared round the hedge. Thus departed John Honorius.

‘ERNEST STRUGGLES’ :

OR A RAILWAY MAN'S LIFE IN THE ‘SIXTIES.’

It is curious how little was written or has been preserved about our railways during their ‘middle-ages,’ so to speak ; that is, between the years 1850 and 1880. The story of their origin and the lives of the pioneer engineers and promoters form a bibliography, while within the last fifteen or twenty years a large number of books dealing both semi-technically and popularly with every phase of modern railway working and management have been published. In short, the fascination wielded by the railway is now thoroughly realised, and a regular literature has sprung up to meet it.

Most of what went on during the intervening period, when railways were consolidating their position, and travellers were reaping the results of imperfect solutions of problems of safe working, has, however, passed into oblivion. Practically no popular book upon railways was written at that time, perhaps, because publishers accepted as irrefutable Ruskin’s maxim, that steam had knocked the romance out of travel, and robbed it of all incident. Did they but exist, the memoirs of the great railway managers of the ‘middle-ages’—as, for example, those of Sir James Allport, Sir Daniel Gooch, Sir Richard Moon, Captain Huish, Mr. Seymour Clarke, and Mr. James Grierson—would supply the missing link and furnish most interesting reading.

In the year 1879, however, a very accurate, graphic, and humorous account of a railwayman’s life and the inefficient methods of railway working in the ‘sixties’ and early ‘seventies’ was written by an ex-stationmaster on the Great Western Railway, under the pseudonym of ‘Ernest Struggles.’ The full title of the work is ‘Ernest Struggles : or the Comic Incidents and Anxious Moments in Connection with the Life of a Stationmaster. By One who Endured it.’ In his preface the author says :

The next generation will smile at the amusement furnished by a record of things as they are, for they will doubtless appear as absurd to them as the foolish notions which actuated our fathers, in their opposition to the formation of railways, do to us.

This little book is very rare, for the Great Western Company practically achieved its suppression. Its sale was prohibited at the book-stalls on the line, and any employé found in possession of a copy

became a marked man. The book is not in the British Museum, neither does it figure in the 'English Catalogue.' The reason of all this bother was the light it threw upon contemporary railway management, and the harsh conditions under which the rank and file of the railway army laboured. Further, the book contains a gallery of caustic portraits of the Great Western heads of departments, from the Chairman downwards, whose identity is thinly veiled by play upon names. For example, Sir Daniel Gooch figures as 'Gabriel Goudge.' In 1880 a second part appeared; but it is not nearly so piquant or interesting as the first.

One of the oldest Great Western officials lent the present writer an annotated copy of the whole, and at the same time gave him many curious reminiscences in elucidation of parts of the work. This gentleman was well acquainted with 'Mr. Struggles,' whom he sums up as 'cheek personified.' Our literary stationmaster describes himself as 'twenty years of age, six feet high, able to translate fifty lines of Ovid, speak French, carry a sack of beans, break a horse, and write a tolerable hand,' when he joined the 'Great Smash Railway' about the year 1860. The directors then appointed the salaried staff, and he obtained his appointment through influence, for his father had been a large farmer near Twyford through whose land the railway ran.

The Great Western Railway of the 'sixties' was not the immense, wealthy, and well-organised undertaking it is to-day. The railway was then a comparatively small one. The broad-gauge fiasco had brought its fortunes to a low ebb, and when Mr. Grierson became General Manager in 1863 its stock stood at about 47. Shortly after his appointment Mr. Grierson came to the chairman, Sir Daniel Gooch, with the news that there was not enough money to pay that week's wages, and unless something heroic were done the line would be in the hands of receivers on the following Monday. The crisis was weathered by the sale of Westbourne Park Villas to a syndicate for £165,000. Not many years later the Company had to buy back one side of its former property, in order to widen the lines between Bishop's Road and Westbourne Park, and the price paid was £250,000, it is said.

But if the G.W.R. of half a century ago was nicknamed the 'Getting Worse Rapidly,' Paddington was distinguished as an intellectual centre. The clerical staff produced an excellent magazine,¹ devoted to art and literature, and were enthusiastic supporters

¹ This imitated the *Cornhill Magazine* in design and colour of cover.

of Maurice's Working Men's College in Great Ormonde Street. Further, they were responsible for a most proficient dramatic society, at whose representations Sir Daniel Gooch, Lord Barrington (the Vice-Chairman), and other high officers performed with the humblest clerk in whom histrionic talent was discovered, while the female roles were assigned to such eminent professionals as Mrs. Keeley, although her last professional appearance was in 1859.

It is odd to think that in the old days, if opportunity occurred, aggrieved passengers could immediately carry their complaints before the Board of Directors. On his first visit to Paddington 'Struggles' saw the stationmaster engaged in a violent discussion with a country clergyman, who seemed to have lost all control of himself, and was vociferously demanding to be shown to the Board Room. Eventually the stationmaster took him there.

Addressing the Chairman, the parson cried :

'I never was more grossly insulted in my life, and if I did not bring the matter instantly before you I should consider myself unworthy of the Church of England. I am a shareholder in this great Company, and I demand nothing less than the man's immediate dismissal. I have taken his number. It is 594, Porter.'

'Send for the man,' said the Chairman.

When the porter stood before the directors the complainant continued : 'I arrived by the last up train, and on asking this man for my luggage, he told me to go to —. I can scarcely believe my senses, but I emphatically state that he said it.'

The directors looked much shocked, and Porter No. 594 was asked what he had to say in answer to the charge.

'Well, gen'lemen,' he replied, 'the gent, he comed out of the train, and he says to me, says he, "Porter, where's my luggage?" and I says, says I, "What's your name, Sur?" and he says "Lester," and in course I told him to go to "L," and he thought I meant t'other place, and wouldn't 'ear no reason.'

The explanation, of course, being that the luggage was taken to an enclosed space, in front of which the letters of the alphabet were arranged, and from which the luggage was distributed in alphabetical order.

While terribly long hours—sixteen, eighteen, and even twenty-four hours' duty without rest—were common at busy stations, the staff of the smallest ones, at which only the Parliamentary trains called, enjoyed a good deal of leisure. Mr. Gladstone's Cheap Trains Act of 1844 first gave the third-class passenger a covered vehicle,

a seat, and a minimum speed of twelve miles an hour inclusive of stops, at a fare of 1*d.* a mile. The Act, however, compelled the running of only one such train in each direction daily, and for many years the Companies refused to exceed their statutory obligations by adding to the number. In order to keep the speed down to the legal minimum, the cheap trains were otherwise objectlessly shunted for long intervals at junctions. During these waits the passengers generally adjourned to an adjacent public-house,¹ being escorted thither by the guard, who earned a commission on the custom he brought.

While 'Struggles' was serving his apprenticeship as a booking-clerk at country stations, where the telegraph was not yet installed, he found ample opportunities for fishing and shooting. The railwaymen of those days appear to have been great sportsmen, or, rather, poachers. Partridges were fond of sanding themselves on the line, which was not then ballasted with dustless material like granite chippings or broken trap-rock. Engines often ran into a covey, and killed a few birds. The driver of the next train met was told, and he feigned an excuse for stopping in order to retrieve the game, going halves with his informant. Drivers even carried guns in the tool-box, and blazed at coveys in the fields as they steamed past. A pilot engine would then go off and search for the game. On one occasion the driver of an engine thus on the loose let his fire out while searching for a hare, and he had to get wood from a fence before the coke would catch hold again. Great execution was done by the telegraph wires, and every surfaceman walked his section accompanied by a dog, to scent out birds brought down by the 'air gun.' Country signalmen were addicted to poaching at night during the intervals of traffic. An inspector was put on to walk the track, so as to detect these absentees. However, the men came to hear of it, and as the inspector approached a box its occupier rushed out and knocked him senseless with a crowbar. The assailant had a very good excuse. He thought the inspector was a wire-cutter, and struck him before he ascertained his identity.

Although the pay rarely exceeded 1*l.* 10*s.* a week, and averaged considerably less, while no uniform was provided—and only occasionally a house—a stationmaster was then a personage of much greater importance in the estimation of the public than he became later. It was a new thing, and the clerks and stationmasters were

¹ Parliamentary passengers were not allowed to set foot in refreshment rooms.

for the most part supplied from the middle class, and were able to hold their own in a gentlemanly way, whereas with the spread of free education the rather mannerless descendants of porters, signalmen, etc., began to join the clerical staff. There was a strong military element among the inspectors. Ex-non-commissioned officers of crack regiments frequently got the job through influence of directors. These men knew very little of railway work, but they paraded the platform with padded chest, and flower in button-hole; were most exemplary in their obedience to superior officers, and most domineering to their subordinates. Of one magnificent blockhead it was said that if told to shunt the next six trains down the embankment, and cut the telegraph wires, he would have done it.

Dishonesty is alleged to have been rampant among the booking-clerks, who supplemented their meagre wages by preying upon the public. The exhibition of a list of tolls and fares was already obligatory, but the authorities took no pains to see that it was placed where it could be easily read, while the printing of the fare upon the ticket did not come to pass until very much later.¹ The *modus operandi* of a dishonest clerk was not to open the pigeon-hole until the train had been signalled, and then to take advantage of the rush to overcharge or give short change to every passenger adjudged either flurried, ignorant, or simple enough to swallow the fraud.

The author gives a vivid and humorous description of seeing this kind of thing openly practised at Oxford station, whither he was sent to learn booking. After the departure of a London express, when he and his teacher balanced the train-book together, the money in the till was several pounds in excess of the amount required and his senior pocketed the surplus. Without impugning the honesty of the clerks as a class, the informant already referred to states that he remembers London men keeping broughams.

In the 'sixties' the clerks did the work of division, which is now done by the Railway Clearing House, dividing a through ticket into proportions according to the mileage of each company and making out a separate abstract for each.

It was often the practice of stationmasters to exercise their petty authority by refusing to issue tickets to intending passengers

¹ The earliest card tickets printed the fare; but the practice dropped out because of the continual changes made in the fares charged through the construction of new lines or the opening of shorter routes. The Act making it compulsory came in force January 1, 1890.

who had not arrived five minutes before train time, persons thus being detained for hours at a station unnecessarily, although they were actually on the platform, money in hand, when their train came in.

There were no compartments set aside for smokers, and travellers who infringed the by-law against smoking were liable to be hauled out of the train and consigned to the nearest lock-up. 'Struggles' relates how the stationmaster at Didcot thus arrested a gentleman on the complaint of a fellow-passenger. When the prisoner was arraigned he proved that the offence took place in Wiltshire, whereas he was now charged in the county of Berks.

'Gentlemen,' said he to the Bench, 'I am a solicitor. I was specially engaged in a case which I shall now miss, and I shall sue the Company for detaining me. I respectfully hold that you in this county have no jurisdiction over what occurred in another county.' He was released, and he did sue the Company, and got 80% damages.

Owing to the risk of fire, smoking was also prohibited in the ramshackle sheds which did duty for stations, but this did not prevent the sale of cigars in the refreshment rooms, where the charge for a glass of water was a penny.

The interlocking of signals and points, which prevents a signalman from leaving his points wrong and his signals right, had not been long invented, and was installed at but very few places. As a rule, points were worked by levers on the ground, at the spot, and were perfectly independent of the fixed signals, the levers controlling which were concentrated in a signal cabin. The dangers of this system were in increasing ratio to the traffic permutations, inasmuch as at important junctions or large stations the operation of the points was entrusted to a special body of men, the pointsmen, who passed a lonely existence in little huts scattered about the track, where they performed their duties more or less independently of each other and quite independently of the signalman. The latter, therefore, was only concerned with the despatch of the trains, which was regulated by intervals of time and not of space. No wonder that accidents due to trains being turned into wrong lines by the pointsmen were of frequent occurrence. While the author was stationed at Didcot the 'Flying Dutchman' had a narrow escape. There were two down lines through the station, one the platform line, which was generally full of shunted vehicles, and the other used by non-stopping trains. One day the switchman left the points

wrong, and the 'Dutchman' dashed through on the platform line, which fortunately chanced to be clear.¹

At places of secondary importance the risks were not quite so great, as the points were manipulated by the porters, who received their instructions from the signalman.

However, the safest places where points existed were the small wayside stations; for there the signalman had to leave his box, whatever the weather, and run to the mouth of the siding and open and close the points himself. No pathway was made in order that they might better perform this duty; but the packers, who were for the most part paid by contractors who undertook to keep the line in order at so much per mile, took a delight in making the road of the roughest possible stones and ballast, which never settled down into a flat path, but crippled the signalmen, and made them all walk like old London cab horses off the stones.

Great attention is now paid to the design of signal-boxes, in order that the efficiency of their occupants shall not be impaired by reason of any personal discomforts. They are made roomy, light, airy and well-ventilated, and are comfortably heated in cold weather.

The old directors believed that the signal-box should not be a source of comfort to the occupier, since to make it so might detract from his vigilance. A description is given of the box at Wallingford Road, as typical of the wayside signal-boxes of the period. It was a tiny hut, with only room for one person. No door was provided, but the signalman was allowed to turn it round (for it rested on a pivot) according to the direction of the wind. There was no fireplace, for the company allowed no firing. Bob, the signalman, assured 'Struggles' that the first winter he was 'well nigh frozed alive'; but his mother having given him two bushes of the tea plant, he planted them in front of the doorway, and having built up a bit of a fireplace, kept going with coal which he picked up on the line, where it had shaken off the trucks, 'it was not so bad now.'

Engine drivers were not infrequently charged with that most heinous of railway crimes, running past signals. One day 'Struggles' went down the line to speak to the signalman, who was engaged at the time in shunting some goods trucks off a down train. To his astonishment, an excursion train dashed through the station on the same line of rails as he was walking towards the box, and when he got there he found the signalman on his knees,

¹ See special note *ad fin.*

praying. 'Oh, Mr. Struggles,' said Bob, 'did you see that excursion train go through and will you go and look at my signals to see as they are against her?'

'Struggles' looked, and the signals were certainly at danger, showing a red light to an approaching train. By a miracle one half of the train being shunted was in the siding, and the other half was clear of the main line scarcely a yard. The stationmaster was sent for, and a full report made to headquarters. Everybody concerned was summoned to appear before the Board. The locomotive superintendent was in attendance to support his own man. So great was his interest, and so doggedly did the enginemen lie, that had it not been for the young clerk's evidence the signalman would have been dismissed the service. And, after all, it was a drawn battle, the directors arriving at no decision.

Trade Unionism on the railways is a much younger growth than in many of the great industries. There was no 'all grades' agitation prior to the Scotch Railway strike of 1883, which witnessed the début of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. Enginemen formed, however, a union of their own at a very early period, and as for long the demand for capable drivers exceeded the supply they were all-powerful, even dictating to the companies concerning the latter's choice of a locomotive superintendent. Until 1880 the only formidable strikes which took place on the railways were strikes of drivers and firemen. By withdrawing their labour from the Eastern Counties Railway in 1850, because they objected to Mr. J. V. Gooch's appointment to rule over them, the running staff brought that company to a 'parlous' condition. There was no question of reinstatement, as the men instantly found places elsewhere. In 1848 the 'old drivers' of the London and North-Western Railway made charges of a personal character against Mr. McConnell, who superseded Mr. Bury, and after a strike lasting two days the Chairman had to dispense with the services of the new superintendent's protégés. A great strike of enginemen on the Brighton line for shorter hours and better pay in 1867 resulted in a complete victory for the men after traffic had been almost wholly suspended for a couple of days. As a rule, however, the locomotive superintendent and the enginemen soon grew to understand each other, and formed a kind of mutual admiration society. Their word was almost invariably taken against that of other witnesses when there was a conflict of evidence as to the cause of an accident.

Until 1880 there was no such thing as 'Employers' Liability,' and, if we are to believe the author, railway directors were sometimes guilty of incredible meanness towards the dependents of employes killed on duty. Here is a tale of simple heroism and its reward.

While 'Struggles' was stationmaster at Thame, the line, which is still a single one, was being extended to Oxford, which necessitated the running of a special ballast train. One summer evening the station staff was waiting for this ballast train to come in, so that the ordinary train, which was in charge of a notoriously reckless and none too temperate driver, might proceed. Suddenly, the latter train, which was heavily laden with passengers, started, ignoring the signal, and without the guard. All the men ran wildly after it shouting; but their exertions were of no avail, for the driver let off an enormous quantity of steam, which deafened all sound to him.

Some then started for the town to summon doctors, while the others ran on in silence, expecting to hear at any moment the noise of the collision. Soon they heard the warning echo of the two 'brake whistles' of the engines, and everyone paused and listened for the dreadful crash. The brake whistles ceased, and a shrill 'common whistle' told them that one train was about to start again. 'They are saved!' one and all exclaimed. The trains had pulled up at a level crossing, two miles distant. This crossing was kept by a poor feeble old man, who had once been a farmer in prosperous circumstances, but was so reduced that he was glad to live in a miserable hut with his poor old wife, and mind the gates for ten shillings a week. But only the old lady was left to relate what had happened.

'Poor dear man,' she said, 'he was planting some seeds, and had taken off the signal for the ballast train to come along, when he looked up and saw Mad Sandy's train coming. I looked up, and saw the trains coming too, and we both ran. Poor dear man, he shut the gate, not that it would stop the train, but he thought they might see it. He moved the large signal backwards and forwards, and I waved the red flag. The ballast train blew the brake whistle, and then Mad Sandy began to blow, but he couldn't stop much, because there was no guard in his train to put on the brake. The trains got quite near, and we only just got in the house, when Mad Sandy's train dashed right through the gate, and a large piece of the gate knocked that hole in the wall, where the poor dear man

lays dead. Oh, Mr. Struggles, they pulled up not ten yards from one another, and my dear husband said "Thank God!" and fell back. He never spoke again, and I wish I had died with him.'

It is alleged that the Company disregarded the old lady's claim, and left her to seek refuge in the workhouse. As for Mad Sandy, the guilty driver, he was merely reduced to charge of a shunting engine at Oxford; for, as we have already pointed out, drivers were scarce to come by. While at Oxford, however, he retrieved his character by the following brave act, in which the author claims to have participated.

A telegram was received that an express engine in full steam had escaped from Banbury running sheds, without driver or stoker upon it, and was on its way to Oxford. It subsequently transpired that the runaway had been put in motion by a schoolboy, during the temporary absence of the enginemen. He was so frightened at what he had unconsciously done, that he jumped off the footplate immediately. The Oxford inspector arranged to open all the points and let the driverless engine run through, on the chance that it would run itself down before very long. This, of course, was a most reprehensible thing to do, when the runaway could have been arrested by turning it into a siding. However, subordinates were fearful of damaging the Company's property, even if not to do so might entail an infinitely worse calamity. Then, driver Sandy came forward and volunteered to chase the runaway with his own engine, which offer was accepted. 'Struggles' turned the points for him, and jumped on Sandy's engine after the 'Empress,' for such was the name of the runaway, had flashed through. The plan succeeded perfectly. On nearing Didcot the two engines were racing along the same line almost buffer to buffer. Sandy crawled along the front of his engine, and with a cat-like spring jumped on to the buffer beam and grasped the tender of the 'Empress.' Another minute he was on its footplate and had shut off steam. Sandy met with much well-deserved praise for this splendid stroke of business. The directors presented him with £5 for his bravery, and restored him to the rank of a passenger-train driver.

From Thame 'Struggles' was moved to Twyford, and next was appointed to Bilston, in the heart of the 'Black Country.' He was a double stationmaster at Bilston, having two stations to manage, three-quarters of a mile apart, and running parallel to each other. They had formerly been on opposition lines, viz. the Great Western

and West Midland. At Bilston he had under him a staff of six clerks, thirty-five men, and twelve horses. The salary was £90 a year, with a house, coal, and stores, which caused the appointment to be regarded as one of the prizes of the service. The author's reminiscences of Bilston are mainly concerned with the intellectual state of the 'Black Country' at that period. During the Crimean War two colliers met at the station, and the following dialogue was overheard :—

No. 1. 'They've took that Sebastopol, Bill.'

No. 2. 'Have they? I hope they 'll hang him.'

No. 1. 'Hauld th' noise, Bill. Tyen a mon; 'tis a place.'

One afternoon, shortly before the royal train was due to pass, two young women, each stripped to her waist, and with her hair tied in a knot behind, fought like trained pugilists in the station yard. One woman was called 'Staffordshire Bet' and the other 'Shropshire Sal.' The husbands seconded them, and interference was out of the question. The incumbent of the empty parish church lived near by, and had a door communicating with the passenger platform, and he often came to look at the trains, and chat with the stationmaster.

'I tried my hand,' said he, 'to make some impression on these people when I came, and one of the first things I did was to hold a Confirmation. Among the candidates was a woman quite forty years of age, and when questioned as to the number of the commandments she replied that there were only three—Easter, Whitsuntide and Bilston Wake!' It was no uncommon thing for murders and acts of fiendish cruelty to occur in the neighbourhood. A man threw his donkey into a blast furnace, because he was offended with it. A man was flung into a coal-pit, where he lived for a week on snails and frogs. More than once 'Struggles' saw hair and blood sticking to the brickwork of the railway arch hard by, the result of some foul play. The father of the mayor of this delectable locality was found almost savaged to death by his own bull mastiff. Despite the barbarism of the inhabitants, however, the stationmaster never received an insult from collier or ironworker. He traversed the district for miles round, often on foot and late at night, and sometimes with hundreds of pounds in his pocket collected for the Company, in perfect safety. One foggy morning the up express collided with a goods train at the station. No one was seriously injured, except the guard of the goods train. One of the directors was in the express, and his face was cut by broken glass. The

great man's wrath and the hubbub he created were awful. So frightened were the men at his orders and recriminations that nobody dared to succour the unfortunate guard, who meantime quietly bled to death. Ambulance classes and instruction in first aid were not yet included in the railwayman's curriculum.

Eventually 'Struggles' was appointed stationmaster at Windsor, at a salary of £110 a year to start with. For obvious reasons the smartest man was picked for that station; but it was far from being a bed of roses. Cranks constantly arrived by train to seek an interview with the Queen, and the stationmaster was expected to intercept them. The Eton boys were troublesome and mischievous. They secreted themselves in the first-class carriages in the sidings for the purpose of smoking. They broke into the booking office and made hay of the tickets, not realising that the unfortunate clerk had to pay for any missing; and on one occasion they nearly derailed the engine of the royal train by turning the turn-table and leaving it in the wrong direction.¹

A great deal of responsibility attached to the stationmaster in connexion with the comings and goings of Royalty. Those were the days before railway officers were rewarded with the minor orders of chivalry and presents of jewellery for work on the Royal Train. 'Struggles' struck up a friendship with John Brown, who had much to do with the arrangements for the Queen's journeys. Together they discussed the plans for a new Royal Saloon, which had been sent to the Lord-in-Waiting for Her Majesty's inspection, who passed them on to Brown. It seems that the Queen complained of the stuffiness of her existing carriages and of the uncomfortable padding to the seats. When the new saloon was finished it was sent to Windsor, and a host of managers of departments, in their best clothes, assembled, expecting the Queen personally to inspect it. The Royal Waiting Room was opened, red cloth laid down, trucks sent away, and porters smartened up. To the disappointment and dismay of the high officials, only John Brown appeared. He stalked through the saloon, letting nothing escape his notice, and with a gruff 'It'll do' walked out of the station.

¹ But what could the statutory watchmen have been doing? By the Great Western Railway Acts of 1835 and 1848 the Provost of Eton or the Headmaster was empowered in the event of the Company's failing to keep a sufficient number of police or other officers on the line to prevent the scholars from getting thereon, to appoint two officers or servants for that purpose, and to charge their wages to the Company. The Railway actually observed this obligation for more than forty years, and the watchmen were only then dispensed with by consent, somewhat grudgingly given, of the College authorities.

John Brown was cordially detested by most railway officials who came in contact with him. The 'Reminiscences' of Mr. G. P. Neele, of the London and North-Western Railway, who made 112 journeys with the royal train between the years 1861-95, relate how the confidential factotum's 'coarse phonograph transmuted Her Majesty's gentle complaints.' For example:—

'The Queen says the carriage is shaking like the devil.'

Or, when a 'hot box' caused the train to pull up:—

'The Queen wants to know what gars this damnable stink.'

About the year 1874, the irrepressible 'Struggles' anticipated his forced retirement by tendering his resignation. The discovery of certain irregularities on his part had sent him to 'see the picture,' which was slang for being interviewed by the directors, and originated in an immense oil-painting of the first Secretary of the Company, which was suspended in the board-room at Paddington. However, a person gifted with such powers of vivid observation and aplomb as he possessed was not likely to come to grief, and he subsequently embraced a commercial career in which he attained success. In after years, when he visited the general offices as an influential customer of the railway in whose service he had been, nothing delighted him more than casually to ask the officials if they had read his books—works which fell like bombshells in high places.

Apart from the leaven of malevolence in the books, they furnish a series of true and lifelike pictures of a forgotten and never familiar epoch of railway working.

H. G. ARCHER.

NOTE.—The 'Flying Dutchman' (origin of the sobriquet unknown) was inaugurated on March 1, 1862, viz. Paddington (depart 11.45 A.M.) to Exeter, 194 miles, in 4½ hours. From 1848 to 1852, however, the Great Western ran a slightly faster train, viz. Paddington dep. 9.50 A.M., Exeter arr. 2.15 P.M. Both trains were originally timed to call at Didcot, 53 to 53½ miles from Paddington, as their first stop. The 9.50 A.M. cleared Didcot 57 minutes after leaving London; the 11.45 A.M. reached Didcot at 12.42 P.M. In either case the speed of the run, start to stop, averaged 56 miles per hour, and in 1848, at least, this booked speed was about 20 miles per hour faster than anything scheduled on the narrow gauge lines. About 1866 the 'Dutchman' discontinued calling at Didcot, and ran through to Swindon, 77½ miles, in 1 hr. 30 mins.; but the train of 1848 reached Swindon in 1 hr. 25 min., including the Didcot halt.

IN THE VINEYARDS OF FRANCE.

BY SIR HENRY LUCY.

I RECENTLY enjoyed the privilege of visiting the châteaux and vineyards of the Médoc in company with representatives of some of the principal houses, who were going about their daily work, and permitted me to join them. Thus I was admitted to the arcana of viticulture, and gained an insight into the operations somewhat deeper than is possible to the ordinary visitor. The talk through the long day was all about wine—'shop' of an exceedingly interesting character. Boswell, with his charming candour, tells how, talking one day about Johnson's only half-belief in second sight, he enthusiastically exclaimed: 'The evidence is enough for me, but not for his great mind. What will not fill a quart bottle will fill a pint bottle. I am filled with belief.' 'Are you?' said Coleman; 'then cork it up.' I am full of lore about the vineyards and the vintages of the Médoc garnered on the spot, and in the absence of the irascible Coleman, and with the permission of a sympathising Editor, will uncork it.

Probably the last idea presenting itself to the mind of the average Englishman when he hears spoken, or comes across in print, the familiar words 'Château-Margaux' or 'Château-Lafite' is that of a building of stone or brick, with windows, chimneys, doorways, and all the conveniences of an ordinary dwelling. *Châteaux en Médoc* seem to him, if he thinks about them at all, very much of the class of *châteaux en Espagne*. Nevertheless, as any chance traveller through the Bordeaux wine country will speedily discover, the local habitations that give name to the most familiar wines drunk (or believed to be drunk) in this country, are dotted all over the plain. On the other hand, one thing that the English wine-drinker would naturally expect to find in the Médoc is unknown—that is, 'claret.' In the Gironde they know nothing of claret, never heard of it except from English tongues or in English wine circulars. Why or how the red wines of France come to be promiscuously called 'claret' when they cross the Channel is an accident of which there are one or two explanations. The true history of the invention has become legendary.

At one of the historic châteaux we halted for *déjeuner*. No liveried servant met us at the gate, nor when we entered the hall was there in view a friendly host. I believe that occasionally, at vintage time, the proprietors picnic for a week or a fortnight in their ancestral homes. For the greater part of the year the châteaux remain untenanted, gloomy as viewed from the outside, cheerless within. As far as I observed, the domestic establishment was exclusively composed of one woman. But she was a treasure, her price above rubies. Our visit having been notified, she had ready a feast in which Epicurus, if he really cared for well-cooked dishes as much as is attributed to him, would have delighted. The meal was slight in conception, excellent in cookery. A dish of mutton cutlets not affronted by coating of bread-crumbs and egg, fried potatoes, each slice lightly browned and in its pride swollen to twice its normal size, a roast *poulet*, a divine salad, a bottle or two of the primest claret in the cellar, a *café noir* of quality rarely served on this side of the Channel, and a *petit verre* of *vin* Champagne. I will not say anything about the cigars, but unflawed perfection is not the lot of mortals.

The artiste who produced this masterpiece was evidently of the *bourgeois* class, and doubtless never in her life had a lesson in cookery. In common with her sisterhood, the art of cooking came to her by nature as reading and writing came to Dogberry. The British workman has no idea of the sort of meal compounded almost out of nothing the wife of a Frenchman of his own grade is accustomed to place on the kitchen table. Over the waste of thirty years I remember a dinner at a *cabaret* at Barbizon, of which the *pièce de résistance* was rabbit in rich brown sauce. Also I recall the ecstatic look on the face of a *commis voyageur*, one of the guests at the ordinary, as he with relentless knife (subsequently placed in his mouth) pursued round the inner edge of the plate the final trace of gravy.

'*J'aime la sauce,*' he said in hushed voice, as one entering a cathedral as the organ plays the opening bars of an anthem feels his soul uplifted with emotion and speaks in reverent whisper.

There is nothing lovely to the eye in the Médoc country. In the time of vintage it is gay enough. Through the greater part of the year—spring, summer, and winter—it is not a place for the lover of the picturesque to linger in. The landscape is flat and for the most part treeless. A well-ordered vineyard, with its

straight lines and trim appearance, lacks the beauty of the English cornfield or the grace of a Kent hop-garden. The very soil which grows the richest and costliest vines seems pitifully poor. The vineyards of Châteaux-Margaux or Lafite are, in truth, too poor in quality to grow anything but the priceless vines whose roots nestle in their pebbly soil.

The Department of the Gironde, of which the Médoc forms the choicest spot, is the great vineyard of France. Its stony soil, on which the hot sun fiercely beats, is admirably suited to the growth of the vine. We islanders have a vague impression that the chief thing necessary for a vine-growing country is plenty of sun. The heat and life-giving properties of the sun are undoubtedly essential; but the soil is the thing. In the Médoc the limits of the most famous vineyards are marked with strange precision. Within an irregular line arbitrarily drawn grow the vines that make the wine of Châteaux-Margaux or Lafite. A hand's breadth outside it vines truly grow, but produce wine of quite a different quality. What the vine likes is that stony ground scorned in the parable of the seed-scatterer. It loves above all things the crevices of a rock, into which its roots penetrate, hardening the plant and imparting a special flavour to the wine. A Médoc wine-taster can tell at a sip what sort of ground a bottle of wine has grown in. A stony subsoil imparts a distinct fineness of taste to the wine, while that grown on a stony layer is marked by greater body and vinosity.

The elaborate care and thought bestowed upon a vineyard is the fullest complement of human endeavour. Not the most cherished nursery in the world is more tenderly watched than are the vineyards which yield the principal growths of Bordeaux wine. I suppose that a labourer in the vineyard is personally acquainted with every vine in the rows committed to his charge, knows its weaknesses, its strength, and is daily watchful to guard it against the manifold dangers that environ it.

The vine is planted in rows varying from 55 to 90 metres in length, the shorter measurement being the more popular. Each plant is fixed to a stick, and along the sticks run horizontal lines of lath, to which are attached the two arms of the vine. Iron wire is, in the more advanced communes, coming into use, as being cheaper and equally serviceable. But there is no more conservative community in the world than that to be found within the borders of the vineyard, and the laths which separate

the vines the sailors looked upon in Bourbon times and beyond them as they hauled down the sail in passing Château Beychevelle still predominate in Médoc.

Pruning begins in the first year, and is carried on under varying conditions to the third year, when the young vine is promoted to establishment upon the line of laths. In the fourth year it begins the extension of its young arms along the laths, a process requiring infinite tenderness and care. Four times a year the vineyard is ploughed—towards the end of February, in April, in May, and in June. In all the ploughings women follow up with a hoe, completing the work done by the plough. Most of the labour in the vineyard is performed by women, who are paid a franc a day. The men receive wages at the rate of about eighteenpence a day. Children are also largely employed in the vineyards, making war against the insects and snails which infest the vine.

In some vineyards the snails pay the cost of collection, providing the dainty dish known to the Paris *gourmet* as *escargots*. When, many years ago, I lived in Paris the trade received a shock from disclosure, made in that reputable journal the 'Figaro,' of the alleged fact that many of the *escargots* displayed in tempting piles in the windows of the restaurants were gathered, not in the vineyards of Bordeaux or Burgundy, but in the cemetery of Père Lachaise. This was probably a ghastly joke, and its deterrent effect upon an honest industry has worn away. In some vineyards the profit to be derived from gathering the snails is taken at second hand, hens and ducks being in due season turned into the middle of the vines and fattened on this food.

Other work in the vineyard in which women largely participate is the process known as *pinçage*. In the leafy month of June lines of women pass through the rows of the vineyards pinching certain carefully selected branches, which, though looking healthy enough, are recognised by the experienced eye as unfruitful. The sap being arrested, the unfruitful branches die off, leaving more nourishment for the fruit-bearers. At the same time the vine is judiciously pruned. In July there is another procession through the vineyards. These are women who cut off the withered branches pinched in the previous month, which, relieving the vine of useless encumbrances, opens it the more fully to the influences of air and sun. In August the leaves are thinned. The process of pruning takes place in the

late autumn, before the commencement of frosts. So tender is the care bestowed upon the vine that in some of the vineyards the vine-dresser, after using the knife or scissors, anoints the wound with a fatty substance, thus sheltering the vine from night airs.

In combating the frost which threatens the vine after pruning, the viticulturists resort to a common device. About the time frost is expected heaps of dry leaves and greenwood are built about the vineyard on the windward side. Two or three hours before sunrise these are set on fire, pouring forth a cloud of smoke, which, carried by the wind over the vineyard, protects it from the frosts. In some communes the proprietors arrange to carry on the work simultaneously. Fires burst forth at all points of the horizon, and the country is obscured by a low-lying cloud of smoke. Worse even than frost is hail, against which, as devout vine-dressers say, there is no help but the mercy of *le bon Dieu*. The typical weather desired by the dwellers in the Médoc is moderate frost in winter, plenty of rain after, but not too soon after; a mild and slightly humid temperature in the spring; a dry season for flowering; moderate heat and light rains in summer-time; then a warm autumn, with not too much rain.

The name of the parasites that live on the vines of the Gironde is legion. Previous to the year 1851 there were quite a collection with which the vine-dresser daily did battle. A primitive process, much in vogue, was to plough the vines early in the coldest season, so that eggs and larvæ might perish. But in the year before the Empire there appeared a new scourge which put the snails, the white worm, the chèvire, and the rest into the shade. This was a sort of mushroom plant, to which our naturalist Berkeley gave the name *Oidium Tuckeri*, perpetuating the fame of an English market-gardener who, six years earlier, discovered the parasite on some vines in a conservatory. This terrible scourge spread all over the Girondine vineyard, doing immense harm. It was discovered that pulverised sulphur would clear it off, and the problem presented itself how best to apply the sulphur over the many acres under vine-culture in the department. An ingenious viticulturist invented a kind of bellows, by means of which the sulphur could be scattered wholesale among the vines. This was called *soufrage*, and in time a machine was invented which, drawn by a horse, perambulated the vineyards and dissipated the *oidium*. But though it

counteracts the effect for a season, the Gironde continues subject to the influence of *oidium*, and every year, just before the vine begins to flower, the bellows go round and the vines assume a sulphury hue.

The Girondins thought they suffered enough when the *oidium* developed itself. There was worse to follow. In June 1879 the *phylloxera* was discovered in a vineyard near Bordeaux. It gradually spread, till it took possession of all the vineyards. Private endeavour has exhausted itself, and commissions have sat in the endeavour, hitherto vain, to discover means of overpowering the plague. One device is to flood the vineyard in the hope of drowning the insect. A more scientific, on the whole, more successful plan, has been the importation of American vines, some of which have been found capable of resisting the encroachments of the insect, the fine French plants being grafted on the imported stock.

This process of grafting works in easily with the ordinary process by which the vineyard is kept at full-bearing point. Grafting is always going on, a certain fixed proportion of young and old plants being rigorously preserved. In one well-known vineyard I visited 10 per cent. of the vines were from eleven to twelve years old; 38 per cent. were fifteen years old; 14 per cent. twenty-five years old; 15 per cent. fifty-five years; and 23 per cent. eighty-four to eighty-five years old. It is stated on high authority that a vine-plant can live for centuries, regenerating itself by new sprouts to which there are, deep in the ground, corresponding roots, the new-comers gradually taking the place of the old stock. In all vineyards in the Médoc cultivated on scientific principles, not only is the varying age of the plants mapped out with mathematical accuracy, but a certain percentage of various growths of plants go to fill the vineyard. Each proprietor has his own theory as to what proportion of *cabernet-sauvignon*, *cabernet-franc*, *carmenère*, *malbec*, *merlot*, and *verdot* shall be mixed to produce the highest attainable perfection of wine. All mix the plants upon a carefully thought-out and patiently accomplished plan.

Vintage takes place in the Médoc about the middle of September. If the season is backward the first fortnight in October may find the multitude at work. It is desirable that the harvest once begun should be garnered with as little delay as possible. The whole population turns out, and, as happens in our own hop-

gardens, recruits are eagerly sought from towns and surrounding districts. The wage of the men at vintage is one and a half franc a day with food, women and children getting about half that sum. To the British workman this would seem a ridiculously low rate of wage. I am told that at the beginning of the period of the Third Empire wages at vintage-time were not more than half this amount.

The operations are ordered as minutely as a campaign. The women and children cut the grapes, every cutter having her own particular row. She collects the grapes in a wooden basket, which when full is passed on to a man called the *vide-panier*, who, handing in in exchange for the full basket an empty one, tumbles out the grapes into a wooden bucket, called in the Médoc a *baste*. At the *baste* is a woman who presses down the grapes without crushing them. To every eight vine rows are allotted two porters, who bear off the *bastes* as they are filled. They empty the buckets into tubs called *douilles*, which generally hold the contents of thirty-two buckets. These are laid in a car and carried off to a winepress, where they are emptied into a machine called a *grappoir*, in which the grapes are separated from the stalks. The stalks removed, the grapes are emptied into the winepress and there crushed.

To this day the grapes are crushed in the Médoc as they were in the time of the Prophet Isaiah. 'Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? Wherefore art thou red in thine apparel, and thy garments like him that treadeth in the winefat? I have trodden the winepress alone; and of the people there was none with me: for I will tread them in mine anger, and trample them in my fury; and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment.' In this simple fashion is the winepress trodden to-day at Château-Margaux, Château-Lafite, and the rest. With the imported vines, machines have come over from America warranted to crush the grape quicker and better than in the old Israelitish mode. Experience convinces the viticulturist that nothing does the work so well as the foot of man. In the Médoc it holds the field against the most alluring patent machinery.

At the Château-Léoville the grapes are delivered out of the *douilles* into the winepresses stationed on an upper floor. These stand upon rollers, and when full are wheeled to the verge of an aperture in the floor, under which stand the great vats carefully

cleaned, the inside sponged round with good brandy. The vats filled, the press-house is closed for several days, and every effort made to maintain an equable temperature that shall not disturb the process of fermentation. The precise time for drawing off the wine is a matter of judgment, dependent upon circumstances. The period that usually suffices is about ten days.

At Château-Margaux three classes of wine are made. The first is drawn from the old and choicest plants which have enjoyed the fullest benefit of the sun and the happiest situation in the soil; the second is the produce of young plants and of vines in the least favourable situation; and the last is composed from what remains in the vats after the clearest liquor is drawn off. Even this does not exhaust the productive properties of the vineyard. The crushed grapes, the produce of which has filled the vats, are subjected to renewed pressure, and, mixed with the drained dregs of the vats, produce a drink called *piquette*, much in favour in the country-side. There yet remains the skin, or *marcs* as it is called. While this goes back to the vineyard in the form of manure, the stones or pips of the grapes are much in request to fatten fowl. Thus of the produce of the vineyard absolutely nothing is wasted.

When it is ascertained that the wine is ready the liquor is drawn off from the vats into hogsheads in preparation for the market. Here once more the infinite solicitude that marks all the process of vintage is strikingly illustrated. No cask is filled straight off. A vat is known to hold so many hogsheads of wine. The hogsheads are accordingly brought up and filled by degrees, getting in equal proportions quantities of wine from the top of the vat, the centre, and the bottom. Thus equality of whatever gifts the wine may possess is established for every separate hogshead.

The hogsheads placed in the cellar where the wine is warehoused become the object of new cares. They are ranged upon long beams, raised above the ground so as to prevent damp affecting the woodwork of the casks. The cellar is kept scrupulously clean, a very picture of tidiness, with the floor artistically sanded and the hogsheads marshalled in nice order. In the first year the wine is thrice racked at special seasons scrupulously observed; the first time in March; the second towards the middle of June when the vine is flowering; the third in October. Within reasonable limits a fine calm day is chosen for the work. The hogshead into which the wine is racked is first rinsed with boil-

ing water and washed out with cold. If it has never been used before, it is treated to a bath of common wine, or, in dealing with more costly vintages, of brandy and water. Lastly, a sulphur match fixed on a wire held through the bung-hole is burned, its fumes being designed to destroy any lurking germs of fermentation, the wine is again racked three times, and at the end of the second year or early in the spring of the year following it is ready for bottling.

While the wines lie in the warehouse preparing for the bottling stage they are constantly visited by tasters, who go the full rounds drawing out with a syphon a sample from every cask and filling their mouth with it, spitting the liquor out when they have formed a judgment upon its quality or condition. There is wine in Touraine as well as in Médoc ; but it is, according to the testimony of the Girondins, a very different article. The aristocratic tasters of the Médoc have a story to the effect that when their brethren in Touraine go about tasting they insist upon having in every cellar a newly whitewashed wall. On this they expectorate the wine. If it sticks, thick and glutinous, it is good ; if not, it will not suit the palate of Touraine.

While vast quantities of wine in the Médoc are bottled at the end of the second year, the fine wines are kept in casks until the third or fourth. Once in bottle, well corked, the mind of man may be at rest about his wine, which up to a certain limit of time goes on improving. Where occasion for care again presents itself is in getting the wine out of the bottle without shaking. Most wine pantries are furnished with a small basket in which the bottle may rest while the wine is drawn into the decanter. Wine-merchants, wine-tasters, and experienced wine-drinkers in the Médoc do not trouble themselves about these contrivances. They carefully lift the bottle from horizontal to upright position some three or four hours before it is wanted for the table. At the same time they carefully mark the side of the bottle that has lain uppermost, and in decanting pour out the wine from that, as it is sure to be free from crust. With steady hand they draw from a bottle a maximum quantity of absolutely clear, bright wine.

Anyone who desires to drink a good glass of Médoc or Burgundy should not decant it till almost the moment it is required, thus preserving the freshness of the aroma. Good wine needs no bush. But in our climate (which, by the way, the experts of

the Médoc declare to be the best possible for storing fine wines) it is better for a little warmth. Rather than drink in the winter months red wine drawn from a cellar in which the temperature has not been maintained at a desirable pitch, it is well to put the wine where it may feel the fire. A better way still is to leave it on the mantelpiece of the dining-room for four or six hours before it is decanted, when it will have had opportunity of acquiring something approaching the temperature of the room. It is well worth while warming the decanter before using, so that the wine may not receive the shock of contact with cold glass. Some hosts possessing red wines that deserve a better treatment brutally serve them up cold out of the cellar, a barbarity equalled only by bringing in the fish half-done or the soup lukewarm. Providence has supplied man with an effectual remedy for the oversight. The hand closed round the filled glass will, if the glass is thin as it should be, speedily bring the wine to the desired temperature.

In spite of *oidium* and *phylloxera*, the wine production of the Gironde has increased and is increasing. The rare and peculiar concatenation of circumstances that go to produce a bottle of Château-Margaux, Château-Latour, or Château-Lafite are narrowed within certain unalterable limits. More good wine can be grown, but not more of the first *crûs*. The wines in the Médoc are divided into *paysan* growths, *artisan* growths, *bourgeois* growths, and fine growths. The fine wines are classified in *crûs*, a result attained at a memorable assembly of wine-brokers in the year 1855. At the head of the first growth stands Château-Lafite. Next comes Château-Margaux, then Château-Latour, and finally Haut-Brion. These are the premier red wines of the world, the pride of the Médoc.

The best wine year in the records of the Gironde is the year which saw the battle of Waterloo and the downfall of Napoleon. Oddly enough, memorable epochs in the history of France have almost always been noted either by marked excellence or determined failure in the wine harvest. The year 1830, which saw Charles X. *chassé* from Paris, was memorable to the harassed vineyard-proprietors, the harvest being small in quantities and poor in quality. In 1848, when revolution once more rioted through the streets of Paris, there was an abundant harvest of excellent quality. In 1852, with the birth of the Third Empire, came the first appearance of *oidium*. But 1870 yielded

a splendid harvest ; only with the French arms beaten back from the German frontier there was no general disposition to trade, and rare wines went at low prices. It is not always that a good year for champagne turns out a favourable season for red wines. But 1874—a year spoken of reverentially by champagne-drinkers—was not less happy for red wines. The proprietors were fortunate in enjoying a time of peace, and got big prices for their products.

Contemporary interest in these dates is provokingly limited. It is said that some wines of Médoc, notably those of the Château-La Lagune, a wine little known in this country, preserve all their virtues after being forty years in bottle. For the best wines and the ordinary palate, thirty years in bottle is long enough.

FORT LOCKHART AND DARGAI.

I.

At another time perhaps I may say something of the life of an A.R.O. (Assistant Recruiting Officer) for Pathans. How his duties take him up and down the North-West Frontier Province from Malakand to the Takht-I-Suliman, and bring him into contact with members of all the Pathan tribes, from the Yosafzais of the North-East to the Shiranis, Mandokhels, and other kindred confederations in Baluchistan. How—save as regards the wishes of the R.O. (Recruiting Officer)—he is, to a large degree, in that thrice-blessed condition, his own master. How, finally, if he does not find it one of the pleasantest and most interesting billets a subaltern could have, the fault lies with him and not with his work.

In the present instance, however, I propose to deal only with a single trip which I made to Fort Lockhart and Dargai, names written ominously large in the history of the great Pathan rising of '97, when the *Jehad* flashed from tribe to tribe along the frontier, and many a little garrison, surrounded by overwhelming odds, had to fight desperately for their lives and the flag which flew above them.

One October morning, therefore, I rattled south from Peshawar station in the Bombay mail—which reaches its destination some two days after leaving Peshawar—crossed the Attock Bridge, guarded by a company of infantry lest any amateur dynamiters from across the borders might try to cut Peshawar's life-line, i.e. the railway from the South, and alighted at Cambelpor. But the mail went on, and with it went a party of pilgrims for Mecca, some pious and wealthy Moslem of Peshawar having given a certain sum of money to defray their expenses. And as the train disappeared from view I followed them in imagination. South they would go to Bombay, and there crowd on board a pilgrim ship, and endure much discomfort and sea-sickness until they reached Jeddah. Here they would wait until a caravan of respectable size had collected. Then they would venture forth, and if their fate was propitious, and the hearts of their Turkish escort strong and of good courage, they would reach the Holy City with no more than an innocuous brush with the thieving Bedouin. Once there, they would perform all the approved rites and ceremonies, and

the weaker ones of the party—the women, perhaps—would return to Jeddah. But the majority would again form a caravan and traverse the wild wastes which lie between Mecca and Medinah. Here, owing to the length of the journey, they would run a further and a greater risk from the Bedouin robbers, but ‘by the Grace of God, Whose Name be exalted,’ they would reach Medinah in safety. At Medinah their troubles would be over, for here they would find the terminus of the Hedjaz railway, which would take them up in safety, if not in comfort, to Damascus. Here their eyes, long wearied with the desolate deserts, would feast themselves on the beautiful gardens and running streams which make the old Arabian authors call Sham ‘an earthly paradise.’ For a time they would ‘drink well, and eat well, and forget the perils and hardships of the journey’ (as Sindbad puts it), and travel down to Beyroot, where they would take ship and sail for India:—finally reaching Peshawar, many months after they had started, light of pocket, but light also of heart, with the authority and rank of Hadjis, and the comforting knowledge that they had dared something, and suffered not a little, in the cause of Islam.

Having thus disposed of the pilgrims, I effected my change of trains, after some further hours of travel again crossed the Indus at Kushalgarh—the bridge in its turn being guarded as at Attock—and finally reached Kohat.

Now all this pother and train-travelling was directly due to a people called the Adam Khels, who belong to the Pathan tribe of Afridis. For far away in the Persian Gulf His Majesty’s gun-boats kept ceaseless watch between Muscat and the Mekran coast, where small bodies of His Majesty’s Indian army dragged out a somewhat monotonous existence. And far away in Seistan, on the borders of Persia, half a regiment of Sikhs lived laborious days, and endeavoured to comfort themselves for their exile by counting up their increased allowances. And all along the North-West Frontier the Border Military Police and the Militias worked as one man. And to the I.B. (Intelligence Branch) and C.I.D. (Criminal Investigation Department) officers in Simla, Peshawar, Karachi, and Quetta, came a stream of information which, considerably condensed and filtered, issued forth again to those immediately concerned, keeping the wires hot day and night. And the one aim and object of all this effort was the cessation of the gun-trade.

In point of fact the gun-trade did suffer a considerable diminution. Dhows were captured on the high seas; caravans had to

seek roundabout and circuitous routes ; less and less money was forthcoming for such a hazardous undertaking. An old and established business fell upon evil days. Both the traders—Pathan, Afghan, and Beloochi merchants—and their clients, the Pathan, Afghan, and Belooch tribes, felt the shoe pinching, and the Adam Khels, who it seems are rather more interested in the business than most, gave vent to their feelings by closing the Kohat Pass. This pass from Peshawar to Kohat runs through the Adam Khel country, and they give the use of it to Government (so to speak) on the same terms as the Khyber Afridis give right of way to Landi Kotal—i.e. a tribal subsidy.

Said the Adam Khels, with sublime impudence, to the Indian Government : ' You have caused us much trouble and loss by your prejudice against the gun-trade. We will therefore shut the pass until you give us so many lakhs of rupees indemnity.'

Said the Government of India to the Adam Khels : ' You have closed the pass, have you ? Very well ; it shall remain closed—for a period—and in the meantime you will lose your tribal subsidy.' Whereat the Adam Khels were very sorry for themselves, met the Chief Commissioner at a Jirgah (tribal council), promised to be good boys for the future, and—the pass is now opened again.

By reason of which had I, an innocent and unoffending traveller, having naught to do with the suppression of that flourishing business in rifles, to accomplish seven and a half hours in the train instead of four and a half in a tonga. From Kohat to Thal there is a narrow gauge railway, and next morning at 6 A.M. I proceeded to Hungu—half-way to Thal, and the jumping-off place for Fort Lockhart—by an obliging and convenient goods train, drawn by two toy engines, on one of which I established myself.

You can only travel from Hungu to Fort Lockhart on two days in the week—Tuesdays and Fridays. On these days a convoy goes up with stores, under charge of an escort, and your ' kit ' goes with it. You yourself go up the pass half-way by tonga, when you find a riding mule ready for you ; and on him you finish the remainder of the journey—about seven miles. As for the pass itself, it is not until you reach your mule that the real ascent begins, then far away a high ridge cuts across the sky, and if you look keenly enough you may perhaps see a vague, small something perched upon it. That is Fort Lockhart. Here and there you catch a glimpse of the road winding upwards along the side of the valley. The hill-sides are clothed with stunted bushes and trees,

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II.

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There was a sense of free isolation about me as I stood on the walls of the fort the morning after my arrival, and swept my glasses round the rugged horizon. A champagne quality in the nip of the air was like a magic potion to one who, like myself, had been lately suffering from one of the curses of India—fever.

To the south ran the Miranzai valley, one of the most fruitful perhaps in the North-West Frontier, with patches of water gleaming in the sun, and shrubs and vegetation very pleasant to the eye, while beyond were hills half hidden by the haze.

To the north rose the bare rocky mountains which, after some time spent on the frontier, one instinctively associates with Yaghestan; and in between the Khanki river, though hidden from sight by the formation of the ground. To east and west stretched the Samana ridge, on which stands the fort, and beyond more bare hills. That was all. Forbidding, inhospitable highlands, rare patches of cultivation, and the empty sky above. Nothing particularly beautiful, nothing particularly grand, nothing in itself to stir the emotions.

And when you visit the North-West Frontier you must remember this. The grip which it has on men is a human, not a scenic one; its romance that of the grim game of life and sudden death, not that of the majestic memorials of bygone empires and civilisations passed away, which appeal elsewhere in India. Here fitfully gleams 'The brilliance of battle, the bloom and the beauty, the splendour of spears.' Here you must travel with other assets than an eye for architecture and a starred Baedeker, unless you wish to depart disappointed.

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both of the kind that is written in books, and that which is told over a pipe and a whisky-and-soda by men who were on the spot. Then indeed you will find the fascination of the frontier written large on every bare hill-side and in every little fortlet that you come to.

It is a wild place, the 'bloody border,' and there is much that is cruel and treacherous, much that repels the Westerner, as well as much that attracts; but when all is said and done it makes men—on both its sides—the wardens of the marches and the freebooters of the no-man's-land.

Yes, it makes men; and there are a score of places up and down the frontier the scene of half-forgotten fights, where the Englishman may feel his blood run quicker because that here his countrymen, or those who served under them, or those who were their foes—for the brotherhood of brave men is of no caste or creed—died fighting gallantly. And Fort Lockhart is such a place.

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the weaker ones of the party—the women, perhaps—would return to Jeddah. But the majority would again form a caravan and traverse the wild wastes which lie between Mecca and Medinah. Here, owing to the length of the journey, they would run a further and a greater risk from the Bedouin robbers, but ‘by the Grace of God, Whose Name be exalted,’ they would reach Medinah in safety. At Medinah their troubles would be over, for here they would find the terminus of the Hedjaz railway, which would take them up in safety, if not in comfort, to Damascus. Here their eyes, long wearied with the desolate deserts, would feast themselves on the beautiful gardens and running streams which make the old Arabian authors call Sham ‘an earthly paradise.’ For a time they would ‘drink well, and eat well, and forget the perils and hardships of the journey’ (as Sindbad puts it), and travel down to Beyroot, where they would take ship and sail for India:—finally reaching Peshawar, many months after they had started, light of pocket, but light also of heart, with the authority and rank of Hadjis, and the comforting knowledge that they had dared something, and suffered not a little, in the cause of Islam.

Having thus disposed of the pilgrims, I effected my change of trains, after some further hours of travel again crossed the Indus at Kushalgarh—the bridge in its turn being guarded as at Attock—and finally reached Kohat.

Now all this pother and train-travelling was directly due to a people called the Adam Khels, who belong to the Pathan tribe of Afridis. For far away in the Persian Gulf His Majesty’s gun-boats kept ceaseless watch between Muscat and the Mekran coast, where small bodies of His Majesty’s Indian army dragged out a somewhat monotonous existence. And far away in Seistan, on the borders of Persia, half a regiment of Sikhs lived laborious days, and endeavoured to comfort themselves for their exile by counting up their increased allowances. And all along the North-West Frontier the Border Military Police and the Militias worked as one man. And to the I.B. (Intelligence Branch) and C.I.D. (Criminal Investigation Department) officers in Simla, Peshawar, Karachi, and Quetta, came a stream of information which, considerably condensed and filtered, issued forth again to those immediately concerned, keeping the wires hot day and night. And the one aim and object of all this effort was the cessation of the gun-trade.

In point of fact the gun-trade did suffer a considerable diminution. Dhows were captured on the high seas; caravans had to

seek roundabout and circuitous routes ; less and less money was forthcoming for such a hazardous undertaking. An old and established business fell upon evil days. Both the traders—Pathan, Afghan, and Beloochi merchants—and their clients, the Pathan, Afghan, and Belooch tribes, felt the shoe pinching, and the Adam Khels, who it seems are rather more interested in the business than most, gave vent to their feelings by closing the Kohat Pass. This pass from Peshawar to Kohat runs through the Adam Khel country, and they give the use of it to Government (so to speak) on the same terms as the Khyber Afridis give right of way to Landi Kotal—i.e. a tribal subsidy.

Said the Adam Khels, with sublime impudence, to the Indian Government : ‘ You have caused us much trouble and loss by your prejudice against the gun-trade. We will therefore shut the pass until you give us so many lakhs of rupees indemnity.’

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due course surged over the Samana ridge and around the little forts dotted along it—Forts Lockhart, Cavagnari, and Gulistan. There was, simultaneously, heavy fighting around each, the tribesmen attacking in large numbers and with great pertinacity. It was thus absolutely necessary that signalling communication should be kept up between the forts, but unfortunately this could not be done between Forts Lockhart and Gulistan, owing to the configuration of the ground, unless the detached post of Saragarhi—about one and a half miles distant—was held. On the morning of September 12 its garrison consisted of twenty-one men of the 36th Sikhs, and by night-fall the little fort was levelled to the ground, the last man of its little garrison had fallen with his face to the foe, and the annals of the Indian Army held yet another record of a dauntless courage which counted death of little account when weighed with duty.

Perhaps I may be excused if I quote from a history of the campaign :—

‘The very meagre account of the defence and fall of Saragarhi is supplied by a signaller at Saragarhi who kept in communication to the last, and by the onlookers at Forts Lockhart and Gulistan who, powerless to render assistance, witnessed the grim tragedy to its bitter end. An overwhelming force of Afridis, put down by the observers as many thousands, was the attacking force, and from the commencement the siege was of a most determined character. . . . The Sikhs on the fort walls held their posts for hour after hour, but again and again the enemy returned to the attack regardless of their heavy losses in dead and wounded. . . .’

Here the Fort Lockhart garrison, though hard pressed themselves, endeavoured to send help to Saragarhi, but the sortie was repulsed. The account goes on :—

‘Now the fate of the gallant Sikhs at Saragarhi was certain. It was only a matter of time. . . . For six and a half hours these heroes fought their great fight, and held their own until it became impossible with the few unwounded men left to arm both the walls and guard the entrance door. . . . From Fort Gulistan two men were noticed under the bastion in the north-west corner of Saragarhi making a hole in the wall. They were covered both from the view and fire of the defenders by a fatal defect in the construction of the fort. . . . Now the attack on the wall was successful, and at the dead angle of the flanking tower the enemy, crowding over their dead and wounded, entered the breach and fought their

way into the enclosure. . . . Stubbornly the noble few who were left retreated into the serai, and hard indeed did each defender die, until, surrounded on all hands, the garrison was mercilessly cut down. One solitary Sikh only was now left, and he defended the guard-room. Magnificent was the resistance which he offered, and alone at his post he accounted for twenty of the enemy—one for each of his dead comrades. . . . During this last glorious stand the enemy, despairing of conquering the last of the Sikhs, set fire to the guard-room, and so the last Khalsa soldier finally perished in the flames. . . . How dearly our Sikh sepoy sold their lives may be gathered from the fact that the enemy admitted that close upon two hundred of themselves had been killed outright. . . .

‘Let me here step aside a little and detail the scene at Saragarhi a few days later, when General Yeatman-Biggs’ relief force reached the dismantled fort. It was a piteous sight. The little post was levelled almost to the ground; and amid the ruins of the fort they had so gallantly defended lay the stripped and mutilated bodies of the little garrison; and as corpse after corpse, maimed and disfigured, was drawn forth, the comrades of the dead men looked on in terrible silence.’

This was the scene that passed through my mind as I leant against the loop-holed parapet of the fort and looked westwards; and the same must have been passing through that of the native officer, for presently he said: ‘Do you see that little mound of stones, Sahib, on that little ridge?’

‘Yes.’

‘That is all that is left of Saragarhi; that and the monument down there behind us which the Sirkar ordered to be erected.’

‘And the remembrance,’ I added.

‘Yes, Sahib,’ he smiled grimly; ‘and the remembrance.’

A few minutes later I was standing outside the fort before the monument—an obelisk—reading its inscription, which ran as follows:—

‘SIKH MEMORIAL.

‘The Government of India have caused this tablet to be erected to the memory of the twenty-one N.C.O.’s and men of the 36th Regiment of Bengal Infantry, whose names are engraved below, as the perpetual record of the heroism shown by these gallant soldiers, who died at their posts in defence of the Fort of SARAGARHI on the 12th September, 1897, fighting against overwhelming numbers, thus proving their loyalty and their devotion to their Sovereign, the Queen Empress of India, and gloriously

maintaining the reputation of the Sikhs for unflinching courage on the field of battle.

‘165. Havildar Ishar Singh.

‘332. Naik Lal Singh.

‘546. Lance. Naik Chanda Singh.

‘834. Sepoy Narayan Singh.’

And so on through the twenty-one, down to the last-named Singh, whose number has been rendered undecipherable by the stress of storm and rain.

No further words of mine are seeming. If you who read this had stood beside me that day before the monument, you would not have required speech from me, or I from you. But we would have felt that before such a memorial our heads had been better uncovered—though being Englishmen we would probably not have doffed our hats—some of the dross of earth would have fallen from us as our thoughts rose high, a great pride would have filled us that these brave men had deemed our race and our flag worthy of their sacrifice, and we would have laid upon their altar the supreme tribute of silence.

III.

The Samana range is not the least sanguinary section of the ‘bloody border.’ Eleven miles from Fort Lockhart is Dargai, and to get to it you pass the site of Saragarhi, and Fort Gulistan. It is a journey of grim memories.

N—, from the garrison of Fort Lockhart, and I made it the Sunday before I returned to Peshawar. We rode on mules as far as Gulistan, where we were to pick up our escort—a party of one of the Border Militias, namely, the Samana Rifles—for Dargai is across the frontier in tribal territory. The Samana Rifles are responsible for the Samana district—just as the Khyber Rifles are for the Khyber, for instance—and garrison the various small posts in it. Except Fort Lockhart, which, as has already been said, *is in charge* of a regular native infantry regiment.

Near Saragarhi the ridge narrowed, and underneath us, on the north side, came into view two little villages—hamlets, rather—about a mile apart. A few miserable huts enclosed by a wall, with a tower at one corner.

‘Talking about blood-feuds, and that sort of thing,’ said N— (our conversation had taken the usual North-West Frontier turn),

'those two little villages down there support one between them. You'd think they'd have enough to do to support themselves, wouldn't you? Yet this one here on our right brought in two wounded last month to our doctor at the fort to be treated. One was a woman, who had been hit by a stray bullet. Probably she was using a gun of sorts, like the men—they often do.'

The two villages were only about half a mile or so off the track, where British territory began, yet this half-mile made all the difference between free and unhindered war to the knife, and a population who were only allowed to carry arms by special permission.

We passed the cairn of stones which marks the site of Sara-garhi, came to Gulistan with our escort drawn up outside, said 'Good-morning' to the subadar in charge of the post, and walked on at the head of our little army, leaving our mules behind for our return.

Our escort swung along at a good pace; we—not to be outdone—also put our best foot foremost. The track was rough, moreover, and after about an hour's tramping one of our party, at any rate, was glad enough of a halt outside a little village. Here I improved our halt by asking for a drink of milk, at which the Enteric Fiend must have been vastly pleased, for he loves to dwell in casual un-boiled milk. The milk was duly produced, but then came the difficulty. We had brought no cup with us, and the owner of the bowl of milk, with an ignorant superstition common to Indian Mohammedans of the lower classes, objected to N—— and me drinking out of his bowl, lest it should be defiled by the touch of Christian lips. I say 'ignorant superstition,' because neither is any such ordinance laid down in the Koran itself, or in the traditions; nor is it practised among Mohammedans whose religion is uncontaminated by contact with other beliefs. In Baghdad and Damascus I have sat at meat with Muslims of the strictest orthodoxy, and in the desert have dipped my fingers in the same bowl with the Bedouin. But Mohammedans in India, from long sojourn with *Hindus*, and being in fact but converts from Hinduism themselves some centuries ago, cling to many of their customs, and this matter of supposed defilement is one of them. Also where policy coincides with fanaticism—as amongst Pathans—the mullahs and various other religious leaders do their best to inculcate hatred of the Sirkar by endeavouring to put Christians altogether outside the pale of friendly intercourse.

However, I was not to be defeated so easily, and putting down

the bone of contention—i.e. the bowl of milk—between us, I plunged into a religious controversy, which was conducted with great good humour on both sides, and which caused intense amusement to the escort and the surrounding villagers.

‘Oh,’ said I, ‘the bowl would be rendered unclean, would it? Now that was rather curious, because though I had read the Koran, and knew a certain amount of Arabic, and had travelled among the Arabs—from whom of course the Mohammedan religion originally came—I had never encountered such a belief. How was that?’

The owner of the bowl was obviously puzzled. The bystanders were impressed. I had made a point. That I evidently knew the elements of their religion, and had read the Koran, was something; that I had travelled amongst the Arabs—whom Indian Moslems hold in great respect—and that I knew Arabic, their sacred language, was more. The escort, who were in a sporting manner backing the Sahib, chuckled.

‘Of course,’ I went on, gazing carefully into space, and letting the words drop one by one slowly, ‘of course I knew that Hindus held such ideas . . . and I had heard that certain Moslems had copied such ideas from Hindus. But why Mohammedans should want to change their religion from that of the Koran to that of Hindu superstition I was unable to understand. Perhaps the owner of the bowl could tell me?’

The escort laughed aloud; the villagers gave a murmur of approval; the owner of the bowl and I smiled at one another. The Pathan is essentially quick-witted, and fond of a jest, and it amused him to see a Sahib gravely arguing a point of religion over a bowl of milk—a Sahib, apparently, who too had right on his side.

The owner of the bowl looked round the little crowd seeking for a consensus of the general opinion, and this being entirely on my side, handed the milk to me.

I made a slight gesture of protest. ‘I would not for the world drink it if he had any idea that. . . .’

‘Nay, Sahib,’ he said courteously. ‘You are my guest. Drink in the name of God.’

‘Bismillah,’ I re-echoed, and drank, and passed it to N—, who also drank.

Then we arose. I gave something to the nearest child ‘for sweets’ (the most tactful way of giving backshish in the East), though where sweets were to be obtained in that wilderness was not

quite clear; and amid the farewells of the village we went on our way. So ended the little wayside comedy.

IV.

A large part of the tragic interest of Dargai lies in its concentration; by far the greater part of our losses taking place over a space not exceeding eighty yards. Concentration in the affairs of life, the flashing of the whole limelight upon a single scene, is after all one of the attractions for human interest, whether it is in art or warfare. Five hundred men killed over a period of two months seems infinitely less tragic than the same number hurled into eternity in a two days' battle.

The loss of five officers killed, fourteen wounded, and a hundred and eighty-two of the rank and file killed and wounded, would in any case have placed the obscure Pathan hamlet—as a name to be remembered—in the annals of the British Army. The fact that, with something over a brigade of infantry actively engaged, besides three batteries of artillery, with an enemy estimated at 2,500, the whole key and crux of the engagement should have resolved itself into a space over which a schoolboy could sprint in twelve seconds, gave it in addition a concentrated grimness which I imagine it would be hard to find excelled in the history of our arms.

It is unnecessary here to go into the details which led up to the action of Dargai: the mobilisation of the Tirah Expeditionary Force under Sir William Lockhart; the move from Kohat to the Chagru Kotal pass leading into Tirah, dominated on the west by heights to which the village of Dargai has given their name, the first occupation and evacuation of the position; even the varying fortunes of the day need not be recorded minutely. It will serve best to record the general impression of the place and its associations.

In due course, then, we found ourselves under the Samana Suk, the ridge which running north and south forms the eastern side of the Chagru valley, which itself has the same general direction. The track running up the Chagru valley is bounded on the western side by the Dargai heights. On October 20, 1897—that is to say, two days after they had been first taken, and had had to be evacuated for various military reasons—they were again occupied by the enemy. Our force could not move up the valley until the enemy had been dislodged. This dislodgment was Dargai.

Distances are deceptive, and from where we stood it looked very long cannon-shot indeed across the valley to the heights on the other side. As a matter of fact I believe it was just 3,500 yards, and that the battery on the Samana Suk did very good practice indeed on the eventful 20th.

We clambered down into the valley, and when in it on to a sort of underfeature which rises from it, and on which is the village of Mamukan. Here the mountain battery guns were placed, and behind it the force and transport not actually engaged in clearing the heights waited until this should have been accomplished.

Then commenced the ascent up the other side. As steep now as it was thirteen years before, though unencumbered like those who had climbed it then by any of the paraphernalia of war; we found it stiff enough, and panted and slipped often in our stride. This part of the ascent, which, like the whole, can only be made on a path broad enough for three or four men to go abreast, lies under cover from the top, and up to now the troops, beyond an occasional casualty, had not suffered severely. But now came that terrible eighty yards—steep, rugged, exposed to the full fire of two thousand tribesmen. Only eighty yards! As we looked up it, how near it seemed to the shelter of the cliffs beyond—where ‘dead-ground’ lay. What an infinity of space it must have seemed to those who gazed across it over their dead and wounded comrades, who but a minute before had charged up it so gallantly, so full of life and courage! And now—what of them remained? Some wounded, perhaps, who feebly tried to crawl to cover and brought a hail of bullets whistling down the track—then lay as still as those about them. ‘Only eighty yards,’ the watchers must have whispered to themselves, as they in their turn set their teeth, and took their breath, and bent their heads to the slope. And five minutes afterwards other watchers had taken their place, to gaze across the same shambles. If ever ground was soaked in English blood, or is sacred to the memory of the Empire’s soldiers—British and native alike—it is that little strip of ground lying far distant on the bare Pathan hill-side, where both Britisher and native fell shoulder to shoulder, and where finally shoulder to shoulder they prevailed.

This is an age of new ideas, ideals, religions; ‘the old order changeth.’ Our ways are not those of our fathers, and there are many who stand at the street corners and prate loudly of new things. War is an anachronism of barbarism, and the soldier is a ruffian in a red coat. Peace—universal peace, so that all may be at leisure

to pursue the elevating trade of making money—is what is to be sought. Patriotism is narrow-minded, and universal brotherhood must be inculcated in its stead. Men who have rejoiced openly at disasters to British arms, when British dead still lay unburied on the field of battle, have later risen to high positions in the councils of their country. More complicated virtues have taken the place of the simple ones of old days. The State has become a storehouse of loaves and fishes upon which the worthy citizen has many claims, but to which he owes no dues—not even the one of its defence from attack. And amid the riot and the babel one stands confused, deafened, and without confidence in the future.

But on heights such as Dargai there comes a change to one. The issue seems straighter, simpler; the future more assured. It appears after all that at the end of things the verdict is in the hands of the men that do, rather than the men that talk. Death, from one point of view, is simple and straightforward enough, and so is duty, and so is the sword. And you find them all three here. How do the lines run ?

. . . Yet be sure
Among the lights that gleam and pass
You'll live to follow none more pure
Than that which glows on yonder brass.

'Qui procul hinc' the legend's writ—
The frontier-grave is far away—
'Qui ante diem periit
Sed miles, sed pro patria.'

T. C. FOWLE.

*THE GRIP OF LIFE.*¹

BY AGNES AND EGERTON CASTLE.

BOOK IV.

CHAPTER I.

THE FIRST MOON.

SPRING is as essentially the time for travelling in Greece, as mellow autumn is for Venice, and leafy June for our islands. Yet in the first splendid October days that Ughtred and his young wife spent along the Attic shores they had no cause to regret the season. He had chartered a yacht for this voyage. The skies and the winds had favoured them. Brilliantly the morning at last dawned over 'the wine-coloured seas.' True, plains and hill-sides spread their burnt stretches devoid of a flush of green, even in the hollows or along the banks of streams; but what visions of gold and bronze, of russet and amber did they not offer at sunrise and sunset! How poignant was the impression of broken column and architrave standing, seemingly translucent, bathed in a glamour of light; rosy and pale gold, out of the arid and desolate glory of the parched land, against the matchless depth and tenderness of the sky! And the purple shadows in the scoop of the hills: ripeness, as it were, of grape against ripeness of corn. And the sickle moon, Diana herself, in slender, stern, exquisite virginity, throning a while over the peaks and then sailing aloof from Apollo's fires which laid sea and horizon in riot and waste.

With such impressions, the initial stage of Ughtred's new and unchosen existence was never that pilgrimage of daily effort he had pictured to himself. He was like a soldier marching to the wars to the blare of trumpet and roll of drum. The beauty of the land burst upon him as in strains of music and bewildered his senses.—Afterwards, his memories of that time were like those of a vivid dream: in which the will seems helpless, and thought and feeling are given over to what the mysterious powers of sleep would have of them.

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His companion at first seemed part of the general dream-like impression.—Solange, in white, with white wings in her hat, on the deck of the yacht: a breezy, tanned, winged being, well in tune with the breath of sea-wind and the sparkle of sea-wave! Solange, untiring, as she climbed the heights beside him, crunching the black bread with strong white teeth and drinking the rough wine as though she had been born of the Greek mountain herself and their hardships were her pleasure! Solange of the Samothracian rock, gazing out across the sea with eyes heavy with thought, as if some memory of a bygone age were lying deep and unfathomable in her soul!

Yet, it was inevitable that there should be times when the inner self, introspective, fastidious and unsatisfied, the restless entity which was Ughtred's, should wake.

He began and tore up—after what had almost become a habit—many letters to John Gordon, each written after some such awakening. The impulse to confide in the only person who knew his circumstances in all their nakedness, combined with his inherent tendency to self-dissection, drove him to seek relief in these expansions. But, scarcely had thoughts and moods been set forth in written words, when the sense of their terrible intimateness drove him to destroy the page.

More than once, as he cast over the deck-rails into the sea the fragments of a just sealed letter, the realisation of the awful privacy and responsibility of marriage fell upon him with what seemed a palpable pressure. Wedlock, popularly supposed to concern merely the material life, appeared to him far more binding of the spirit than of the body; it was his soul that was chained to another soul. Chained because there had been no spontaneous union. And then, like a flash through a dark night, revealing only for the second beauties unguessed by the traveller, there would rush upon him gleams, visions of what it might mean to a man if his soul had found its real affinity. What of soaring ecstasy if, when the lips met, the spirits rushed together!

'J'ai passé à côté de la joie' . . . (he wrote in one of these obliterated confessions). 'You, who have known what this joy is, know what I have missed. Sometimes I tell myself that if fate had carried me to the realisation of my mad dream—even if the realisation had brought after it a bitterness as complete as the

ecstasy, I would at least have had that moment out of life—that single moment of initiation !

‘And yet the very thought is treachery. I am trying, heaven knows I am trying to do right. *No one*, you told me, *has touched the depths of human misery, who can still do right.* Once I had gone away with my wife, you said, my path would lie clear. I do not think that I have failed her, failed, I mean, in my loyalty upon a single minute point ; but, aye, there’s the rub ! It is not enough to act. To do right a man must feel ; it is not enough to act. He must sweep the chamber of his brain clean of even a thought. Not only that, but for every word, for every gesture of devotion I should find the spring in my heart. I should not only be playing the part of bridegroom, however conscientiously : I should be the bridegroom. Oh, John Gordon, there is something in me that laments, something that bleeds, like a secret wound, over myself, over her ! You said that to work, to make another happy would bring happiness. . . . Sometimes I think that it is at the very moment when I see a tremulous radiance about her, that I am most miserable.

‘Beautiful, honest, high-minded, single-hearted, pure and passionate—what had she not a right to demand of life ! Is it possible that, had I not been lured and cheated, tantalised, trapped and flung aside ; that had not my energies been sapped while still unsatisfied, I might have found myself the man for her noble womanhood, might have found in me the ripe response for all this beauty, all this innocent generosity of love ?

‘We have had a long day. And now, while I write to you, my wife has fallen asleep in the battered chair of this odd painted room in the Xenodochion, at Tiryns. Valiantly she started with me at dawn, and valiantly climbed by my side the mountain path. She is frankly ignorant of all classic knowledge ; but she is no worse companion in this land for that. She listens to what I tell her, as a child to some lovely fairy tale. And when the mood of abstraction is upon me, she is silent too, and her presence seems to become part of the very landscape about me. For she is of an essence so natural as to fit in with nature. Her strength is as untiring as her spirits are dauntless. She springs from rock to rock like a deer. To-day she frightened me by her boldness, and I caught her in my arm on the lip of a cyclopæan crag. She let her young weight lie on my breast without resistance. It was the hour of meal and rest, and our guides were sleeping in the shadows. Pressing closer against me she whispered : “Do you remember ?”

'I had remembered—with that curious memory of the body that stirs in every nerve to a repeated impression—those minutes between life and death on the ruined walls of my Keep, with the blue vault above us and the roar of the sea far beneath, and the length of her upon me, and the weight of her actual existence actually pressing upon mine. . . ! Many times, and in many different places, has this physical memory returned to me, but never with such a curious pang as to-day. Even now such a sky was above us, but bluer, more sun-steeped, infinitely deeper: the sky of Greece! Yonder the wash of the waves lapping the shore: *Ægean waves, the shores of Argolis!*

'I felt the blood rush back to my heart; and knew myself white. Even as I looked down and saw the flag of a happy crimson on her cheek, she looked up at me. I closed her eyes with my cold kiss, for the love in them was just then beyond bearing.—Oh, the might have been!

'To-night, after our odd meal, over which fatigue robbed us both of thought, she flung herself in my arms and hugged me like the child she is. "I have had such a happy day!" she said. And my heart has never ceased aching since that moment on the crag.

'Now she is asleep, her forehead shadowed by the loosened masses of her hair; and upon her lips there is a smile. A mad impulse takes me, so mad that I know it can never be listened to. I feel impelled to fling myself at her feet, clasp her knees and wake her, as she lies smiling, and say to her: "Poor child, your joy is a sham, your husband is no lover; every kiss that causes joy in you, stabs him with pity and remorse. Let there be truth between us. Let us clasp the truth even if it kill us!" And then in this horrible pain we might cling to each other. And, who knows? if my lips could only meet hers then with the truth upon them, love might come!

'And this, as I have written, is madness; since out of what I can give her content has come to her, I, too, must find in it my content. Nor am I likely thus to insult the giver in the gift. Is not the vision of her, weeping with her arm across her eyes, stamped upon my heart, and will not her words, "I have shame," for ever ring in my conscience? It was for me, and for her kinswoman, that she had shame. If a word of mine brought that clean, bright creature to have shame for herself, then no blood could ever wash the guilt of it away. And though it is her confidence that hurts me most, yet for gratitude of this very confidence I must lead her blindfold on.

'Before our marriage, during our strange betrothal days, I

marvelled at the strong silence which she kept upon every circumstance connected with my mad infatuation. Now this continued silence puzzles and disturbs me. Does it spring from a buoyant conviction of love returned, or, from an almost superhuman generosity? Is there in her heart a secret chamber wherein dwells doubt, jealousy, and fear; or has her perfect love cast them all out? Either explanation is possible, with such a nature as hers.

‘ Dear John Gordon, you will wonder at my silence. I have written and torn up many letters. But you asked that I should write to you. I will not be so ungracious or so ungrateful as to fail to comply. What shall I tell you, after all? Of what all this land reveals and hides; of the spirit of the dead which broods here more potently than the life of the trivial, degenerate race that now treads the sacred soil; of the colours of these barren mountains, the eloquence of a broken plinth, a withered grove, a babbling spring? I am writing in the little lamp-lit deck-cabin on the yacht. There is a swell on the waters and I am rocked like a child in its cradle; at each slow dip a vision of starlit sky gives way to the glimmering lights, clustered together at the foot of a massed darkness, which is Mount Kynthos. The isle of Delos, friend, the lights of Delos! What that ought to be to me! No, I do not realise it, I only breathe it in.

‘ Once I had thought to reach the culminating point of mental activity in such a voyage. But then I had not contemplated it as a honeymoon voyage. And this brings me to what you want to know of me, does not it? And from here I can see you knit your bushy brows over my dithyrambs; hear the snort of scorn that blows your Jove-like beard apart. Is it well with me? That is what you want to know?

‘ Master, what can a man want more than good bread and spring water and pure air? Are not these things necessary and sufficient?

‘ It is early morning: dawn over Paros. I have had my plunge in a sea all rosy from Aurora’s own colours. Solange is still asleep. I had little sleep last night; and so was glad to get out of the gloom of my cabin into the wonder of the painted day. She called me in the midst of my letter to you; and we had a singular conversation.

‘ It is the first that has raised the veil that hung between both

our souls. Since you are to me father and friend, I can find no better way of putting you into the knowledge of how it fares with me than by setting down this conversation. Only understand that it has come after a silence dating from the very hour of our betrothal.

'I found her, then, stretched on the canvas chair just outside the open door of the deck-cabin. She was gazing up at the sky in which sailed the moon at her full, wrapped in such an effulgence as I have seldom seen. The full moon; she was but an exquisite crescent when first I saw her hang over Mycenæ's hills. That means we have been a fortnight in these waters. My wife held out her hand to draw me down to the chair at her side.

"I wanted you to see this," she said. "How it is beautiful!" in her fluent though imperfect English. Here indeed was no "lean, pale lady," but a voyaging queen, drowning the stars in her splendour, spreading her pathway, mackerel silver and blue, across the waves.

'Our vessel rose and fell upon the bosom of the sea as with her deep breathing. I thought of my stormy tides and of the desolate rock in the north country of my Keep, of the poisoned joy and the despair it had held. And upon the opulent peace and the ecstasy of this southern night, the memory came like the shadow of some flying storm-cloud. I sat down in silence. She drew her hand from me quickly, and spoke no more for a little while. Then suddenly she burst out:

"What am I to you, at the end?"

'So unexpected was the question, so unwonted to my ears, after these long days of companionship, the threatening surge of anger in her voice, that I stammered and stared. For a moment it almost seemed to me as if my hidden thoughts had betrayed me.

"What you are to me? I do not understand!"

"Oh yes, you do. After all—I have a right to know. I have been reading"—something like a sob rose in her throat—"that novel you bought for me at Athens. It is all about people married, like us. No, not like us, for they——" She broke off for a moment, to beat back that mounting heart, then went on: "They call each other love, beloved, sweetheart. It is an English book. I had not read an English love-story before. You call me child, or Niké—and sometimes dear; never, never those other names. When I read it, I flung the book away, and told myself it was silly—that such things don't make up love. But this night, as I sat alone and saw how it was beautiful, I said to myself: 'This is the night

for love—and he is writing. I will call him, and he will come ; and then perhaps he will say, if not “beloved,” nor “sweetheart,” perhaps just “darling !” Oh, Ughtred, it is such a lovely word !”

‘ Her face, all etherealised in the ethereal light, was quivering with that childish droop of the lips, as she turned it on me. Would you believe it ? Have I a heart of stone ? I would have given my right hand then to say to her : “Darling !” And I could not. But my heart was not of stone, for it was wrung within me. I knelt beside her and took her hand. “Solange,” I said, “I will call you wife. Is not that enough ? Solange, you ask what you are to me. Just as you called me I was writing to my friend, that old friend I told you of. And I was telling him——”

‘ I saw her agitation—what was more a passion of doubt than an acknowledged anguish—subside to the mere sound of my voice.

‘ “You told him what ?” she breathed, and her lips and eyes seemed to drink in the answer. Hers is the absolute confidence, the trust of a child.

‘ “I told him,” I said, and my voice trembled in spite of myself, “that you were to me as bread and water and air—do you understand ?”

‘ “Bread and water and air—but that means the food of life,” she said. “Oh, Ughtred !”

‘ “That means the food of life,” I answered her.

‘ “You could not want to be more to me,” I whispered, after a while, when we had kissed each other.

‘ “No,” she said contentedly, her hand in mine, “more than that, no one could be to you.”

‘ Alas ! there was one whom I had called my Soul ! We sat then again in silence side by side. And after awhile, with her warm palm against mine, I felt I must speak or she might once more fret and wonder that I should be silent “on such a night.”

‘ “Have you doubted me ?” I asked her. “Often ?”

‘ She had answered me by that once familiar proud upflinging of the head and curl of the lip, even before the word came :

‘ “Never !”

‘ Perhaps she saw surprise upon my face ; for she added : “How could I doubt, when you took my hand that day and said to me ‘There is no reason why I should not take your hand.’ I knew I could trust you then. I do trust you. *N’êtes vous pas gentilhomme ?*” And upon this, with a tenderness, which moved me the more, I think, because it should have moved me so

differently, she added: "And then, that last night, outside the Chapel——" She did not finish her phrase; but her eyes spoke the thought: "I knew that you loved me."

'Oh, perhaps I do, after all, John Gordon! But not with my soul—God help me—not with my soul! "*Vous êtes gentilhomme*," she said. And therefore it was that she trusted me. I fear, poor girl, it is no solid basis for a woman's trust.

'Your *gentilhomme*, within certain conventions, may be as heartless a villain as you please; as, indeed, within still more restricted limits, perhaps may be your "perfect gentleman." Yet, to be a gentleman is by no means the equivalent of *être gentilhomme*, a definition which necessarily comports traditions, race exclusiveness, the obligations of aristocratic pride.

'No, putting aside whatever attitude of mind may have come to me through class exclusiveness, which no doubt influences the ceremonial of life, I must try to meet this confidence of my young wife's by being *honnête homme*. How is it that we have no phrase to describe that human entity? Honour—that big word—stops short of the idea. Honour—that is a creation of the mind, in many cases a purely artificial point of view. But, to be *honnête homme*, one must have qualities of humanity, an intimate honesty of thought. Honour is a cold and personal thing, a thing of the brain, *l'honnêteté* springs from the heart.

'I trust that in this new life of marriage I may take it for granted that I am to my wife, *gentilhomme*, man of honour. I strive to be *honnête homme*.'

This letter was the only one that was sent by Ughtred to his friend during his wedding journey. The habit of such outpouring proving one too congenial to be at once abandoned, the young man continued indeed the chronicle of his thoughts and emotions, only to destroy the record on perusal.

CHAPTER II.

LEARNING THE NEW LIFE.

'Do you imagine,' he cried out to his friend, one stormy midnight from the harbour of Syracuse, 'that it is an easy life that you have condemned me to, you, master, in your rigid righteousness, and

she, Aglaé, in the cynicism of her terror ! Of all men I was born to independence of thought and action.

' You mocked me when I told you that, by essence, I am celibate, that by vocation I am solitary. The longing that comes upon me to be alone is sometimes beyond bearing. I look at those peaks against the morning light, and alone I want to climb them ; to stand alone upon the summit and commune with my own thought alone. But how can I leave my wife ? We are not four weeks married. If I am so much as a few hours out of her sight, her eyes question with a look that hurts me. I would rather she scolded, that she were the old turbulent, impatient Solange.

' To-night the wind has risen, and we are tossed, as we lie at anchor, by a tumultuous sea. The fret of the storm and the call of the wind have started torment in my soul. After she had turned in I remained on deck, gazing seawards into the gloom. The high wind beat straight against me. Even in the harbour the white horses galloped. Had I been alone, I had found it in me to slip our anchor and sally out into the tumult. Some wildness within me panted to be out among those wild elements that ruled the waste beyond. The anchor chain was as the chain upon my freedom. Now and again a mightier wave than the rest would strike the yacht and set her bounding and quivering like a hound straining on the leash.

' The driving spray against my face stung me to craving ; against my lips it was like the foam of intoxicating wine. Waters and wind choired together ; the very depth of the darkness had its appeal.

' I was perhaps a little mad ; or there was in me a kind of savage reaction after the long painstaking constraint. However it may be, it was an ill-chosen moment, poor child, for her to exercise (for the first time) that form of wifely interference to which I had so often seen—and never without a derisive pity and a delightful sense of my own immunity—the married man succumb in my Oxford days.

' With the loud voice of wind and wave in my ears I was not aware of her presence until she touched my arm. I started and beheld her, with a sense of resentment disproportionate to the occasion. For one instant I had been alone, miles away from the thralldom of circumstances. It seemed to me that I had to fetch my soul back from its distant flight of freedom.

' She was wrapped in a cloak, and had drawn the hood of it over her head ; in the darkness I could see of the shrouded figure but one thing clearly, the extended left hand. That caught the

ray from one of the deck lamps, and on it the wedding-ring gleamed. I asked her what she wanted ; I hope the noise about us prevented her from noticing the anger in my voice.

“Ought you to remain out here in this weather, Ughtred ? Without even your overcoat ! Do come in, or at least put on something.” She ran that hand, with the ring, down my arm. “Oh, you are quite wet !”

‘At that moment our craft lurched under a heavier wave and a sudden gust tore, shrieking, past us. I caught her, instinctively, as she reeled. Even such a storm wind had once seemed about to fling Aglaé into my arms : Aglaé, whom I had dreamed I loved. . . . But as all things connected with her were destined to mock me with their intangibility, it was but the fluttering veil that had touched me. Only the touch of her veil, yet it had been ecstasy ! Now into my grasp was cast my wife, and it was all her superb womanhood that I held. It was all mine, to have and to hold, this pulsing, ardent, flesh and blood creature. And yet, I tell you, John Gordon, that so overpowering a temptation came upon me to unclasp my arm and leap into the dark night and be free, that I hardly know how I resisted it !

‘She gave a smothered cry, and I realised that I had crushed her in my arms. That brought me back to myself. She looked up at me then. Master, she had taken the pressure of my agony for that of love passion ! Her hood had fallen away from her face and I could see her eyes close to mine. Then she shivered, and I saw that she had flung only this cloak over her dressing-gown ; her feet were bare in her slippers on the wet deck. All at once I was possessed with fear for her. She was mine. If I did not at least watch over her, and keep her from harm, I was the last of humanity.

“What imprudence !” I exclaimed. “Come in, come in !” I flung my arm again about her, to draw her back to her cabin, and she clasped her hand warmly over my cold one. . . . And so I went with her—the slave of that ring !

‘What a singular thing is marriage ; how it changes the very essence of the individual ! Here was the wild girl—Niké—she who had mocked the abyss, who had dared death, now finding in the storm but the stirring of a *bourgeoise* solicitude, for her man, her mate ! And here was I, on the very point of a suicidal mood, forgetting my frenzy in the thought of her bare feet !

‘Hand in hand we went in to shelter, a pair of wild creatures,

yoked to Nature's plough and fated to draw the furrow she has marked out.'

This was the last of the confessions of Ughtred; out-poured only to be cast away unheard. Among his correspondence awaiting him at Cyprus, he found a letter from John Gordon, an answer to the single document that had reached him.

'You are mistaken,' wrote the sage, 'in thinking that I want you to spend valuable time in penning to me the results of this quantitative self-analysis, which seems to have become a habit with you. If you must use your pen at all, use it upon some piece of solid work. Give the spare hours to that. Give me only an idle minute, here and there, on a picture postcard. (My bed-maker's little boy collects them.) Believe me, dear Maxwell, this request of mine springs from no want of interest in your doings, rather from my constant desire for your well-being.

'The habit of introspection is a fatal one—it is the disease of the cultured young generation. Like children, you are all so occupied in digging up your seedlings daily, to see how they are growing, that what might be a sturdy, wholesome plant has no chance of taking firm root in your minds. This habit has moreover a secondary, though hardly less prejudicial, consequence—the actual process of self-examination becomes one of such absorbing interest that the weed obtains as much attention as the wheat, and is regarded with an equal complacency. I will grant you that the result may be the making of a character capable of no very serious harm—but, on the other hand, how miserably lacking in manly uses. For heaven's sake give your new life a chance! Climb as many mountains as you can on land (I would recommend the ascent of Hymettos): and on sea, why not learn to undertake the practical management of your own yacht? You are in good equipment for travelling. Why not prolong your journey for yet a few months? Africa, Egypt, Sicily—do they lure you no longer? England promises to be gloomy this winter, and April is a pleasant time for an English home-coming. I fancy Lady Maxwell will endorse this—'

Ughtred's first impression on reading these lines was the sore revolt of his easily stirred pride. The next was that better movement of a nature which, with all its faults, was an essentially truthful one. Once again his old master had firmly laid bare the inherent weakness of his disciple. It was true, and he had himself written it in so many words: his energies were sapped. He had

attributed this to the action of Fate upon his life. But could he deny that, previously even to the chaos of his illusions, this loss of true virility had not already set in? Save for a page or two of amorous verse, had he done a stroke of honest work since his entering upon his great possessions? The scholar was moribund in him. What of the athlete? Only a year ago, a whole day's rowing, a holiday week of rock-climbing—rising with the dawn to return only with nightfall—meant a rejoicing in every concomitant of the feat accomplished, even to the subtle delight of fatigue. Was anything of either left in this new personality of his, already pampered with money, with his yacht, his motor, his cooks? True, on his first arrival in Greece the cragsman's spirit had re-awakened in him, but only to the extent of a couple of mild expeditions. And as to study, the thought of taking up again that task, which once had seemed to him the very pivot of his existence, evoked such a storm of repugnance that he realised its impossibility. Wise John Gordon! Ughtred could well read between the lines, how utterly the master had given up all ambition with regard to the once promising scholar. Yet the mere man he still thought possible to save.

Well, if the body and its best attributes could be made to flourish to the quieting of a restless mind, so much the better. It was worth the trial.

As for the suggestion of wintering away from home, Ughtred told himself, bitterly enough, that he must indeed be mistrusted by the one who knew him best, since so prolonged a neglect of his responsibilities was thus urged upon him.

Yet the advice was congenial enough. Ughtred had the instinctive shrinking of the unduly sensitive from every unpleasant or equivocal situation. Beyond this there was the distaste of a reserved nature from anything likely to cause a revival of past violent emotion—in his case doubly distasteful, because now doubly illicit. And there was, underneath all, the unacknowledged yet perpetual ache of broken illusions and deeply hurt feelings, ready to cry out at the slightest touch.

To return home—to face the rejoicings, the welcomes, the feasts, the speeches; to find the dual *role* of benevolent landlord and proud bridegroom thrust upon him together before the public eye; and that other private *role*, infinitely more repulsive, that of nephew to the man he had plotted to rob, of nephew to the woman to whom he had spoken mad words of love! To keep steady in his determined loyalty to his wife and ignore the secret thrusts of malice

or of a yet more insidious tenderness. To act, in fine, as if all his soul's tragedy had never been and as if the bonds of his 'reparation' had been a chosen joy; no, John Gordon was right, he was not yet strong enough to face all this without risking to fail in the very springs of courage.

Nevertheless, he told himself, it was not for him to decide. Better the danger and the torment than that suspicions which his young wife's generosity had hitherto repudiated should spring into life. Thrusting the letter into his pocket, he instantly sought Solange.

The yacht was speeding merrily out of the harbour. Solange in her white winged hat, her loose white serge coat, was leaning over the taffrail, looking at the receding shore. It was a gay breezy day of cloud and shine, but there was already the hint of coming winter in the air. Its blustering caress had whipped the carmine into the face she turned smilingly upon him. He hesitated a moment, choosing his words; and she forestalled him with what proved an excellent opening:

'Good-bye, pretty isle; shall I ever see you again?'

'You have liked these places then?' he said.

'Liked them—loved your Greece, Ughtred? Your Greece and our honeymoon land? But—every rock of it, and every bush, and every last stone of ruin! And then it is all sea, besides; and the sea is all that I adore.'

'The days are slipping away,' he suggested. 'You will be sorry to say good-bye to the yacht.'

The colour wavered in her cheek; her eyes misted.

'Ah, that, yes,' she answered, looking down. He seized his opportunity.

'Solange—would you rather not go home, yet?'

She flung up her head and shot a quick look at him, in which there was something of the old fiery spirit he thought to have lost in her.

'Why do you say that to me? Do you think I am afraid? When you wish to go, I am ready to go with you.'

He knew that he was flushing; but he paused again deliberately to reflect how to proceed. He must no more allow her to think him eager for a return than afraid of it.

'I thought,' he said at last, rather huskily, 'that you might, as I should, have liked to prolong this sort of life a little.' Then, feeling that in the clear light of day, with her straight look upon

him, he could bring his lips to no word of hypocrisy, he proceeded : ' When two have to live their life together, Solange, a few months out of it are not too much, just by themselves—to learn.'

Her glance suddenly pierced him with so vivid, so flaming an inquiry, that, as if before the flash of a blade in the sunlight, his eyes wavered. Then, vaguely feeling all the significance that might hang upon a shade of expression, he forced his gaze to meet hers again. The flame had left her eyes. They widened upon him and grew dark in their setting as the pallor of an intimate emotion spread over her face.

' To learn——' she repeated in a low voice.

' To learn,' he said again—humbly and gently—' how best to make two lives one.'

Her glance questioned for a second and then fell. Then she flung out her hand to him. As he took it he tried to give a careless tone to the conversation. They stood on thin ice together ; and the plunge into the dark waters beneath was, of all things, to be avoided.

' Egypt, Solange ! The Nile, Sicily !—what strange and beautiful places can we not visit together—steep ourselves in sunshine and colour and antiquity—gather memories for all the long English winters we shall see pass over our heads !'

' It will be very well,' she answered briefly in French ; leant towards him, as if to lift her cheek to his, but bethought herself and, after a pressure of the hand, which cordially but effectively parted them, turned again to her post of contemplation.

Ughtred stood beside her, with an odd feeling in his heart. It was the first time that she had thus checked an impulse towards him. Not that she was lavish of caresses ; she gave them as rarely as a healthy child, but when she gave, it was with a child's generosity.

CHAPTER III.

KISMET.

EGYPT, Sicily—the programme that Ughtred had sketched on the impulse of the moment was undertaken.

They spent Christmas together on the Nile. For several years he had given the eve of that feast to John Gordon. Peaceful, rather silent evenings, these had always been, as of two lonelinesses

meeting, when all the rest of the world had family cheer and tender foolish mirth.

Away in the far golden land, upon the sluggish waters, with the desert stretching on either side, Ughtred on the deck of the *Dabayeh* watched the rising of the night with a quietude of mind that was more perhaps like the soothing of an opiate than a genuine state of rest, but nevertheless grateful after the constant turmoil. A deep stain of orange still tipped the ripples, the last after-glow of a sunset that seemed to steep his whole being in colour. There was a very little breeze, and the flat boat went with it so lazily that all the sounds of the shore could reach his ears, even to the dry rustle of the palm leaves and the whisper of the rushes. From the village they had just glided by came the barking of dogs, the cry of the children; and further away the odd dry beat of the tom-tom, that throb of the East that sets the heart of its lover leaping. The smell of the desert was in his nostrils, the touch of the desert on his pulses, the drugged peace of the desert on his heart.

Out under the dim purple vault of night wherein the very stars seemed iridescent with unknown tints, the phantasmagoria of the day's moving pageant slowly wheeled again before his vision—flame and shade. Wide and wider sand spaces, quivering in the heat, rock mountains glowing like beds of magic carnations; violet lakes of shadow and ruins of lost palaces; temples of fierce forgotten gods, monoliths black and lonely against that last sunset pyre, the glory of which made pale all his eye had ever held before.

As he stood, not so much dreaming with the mind as with the senses, Solange came and stood beside him. He took her hand and was glad to take it. In this immensity, not only of space, but of past time, what was he but an imperceptible, wandering atom, traversing his minute limit according to a law as vast and immutable as the sky above and the waste below? This was Fate. And here, beside him, was this woman whom Fate had given him. . . .

Kismet! He had found submission, and in it content. Kismet! That submission which is as far removed from the Christian 'Fiat' as Death from Life; as the utter negation of the will from the most difficult act of human energy.

It was at Assuan they found their belated batch of Christmas letters: Ughtred's budget, a large one from Honor Maxwell, consisting mainly of such appeals and begging letters as his agent saw fit to forward to him with the monthly reports. Solange, besides a little family packet and a letter from Uncle Annibal enclosing a

considerable cheque 'to buy thyself any Egyptian bimbelerie, *ma petite*, that may take thy fancy,' received a document from Vaucelin over which she drew her brows with an air of anxiety. She read it again and her first look of distress was succeeded by so hot a blush that Ughtred looked at her in marked surprise.

They were sitting on the terrace of the Savoy Hotel, on the Elephantiné which they had all to themselves this midday hour when the other guests were eating within. Every time the hot wind lifted the flaps of the red and white awning, they had a vision of burnished palm leaf and vibrating air.

'What is it?' asked Ughtred.

She glanced at him a moment, hesitating, from the depth of the cane lounge; then gathered herself together as upon a sudden resolution and came over to him where he reclined with his papers spread over him. He glanced at her lazily, and thought how tall and strong she looked, and how well the severe cut of her white garments became the lines of her figure; how vividly the ripe colour of her hair and sun-kissed face showed above the snowy lawn of her blouse. As he looked, he was scanning verses in his brain, lilting them dumbly on his tongue—love verses, to her. The inspiration seemed to spring up in him, these days, like some tropical flower, heavy scented, vivid-hued; as easy to write under these skies as for the rich petals to expand; different indeed from the high ecstatic, falsely soulful and tormented efforts he had dedicated to Aglaé.

But Solange was innocently enraptured—more precious than jewels to her were these gifts of her lord, when they were poured before her.

Before he could make them audible to-day, however, she spoke:

'It is our old Vaucelin who writes,' she said. Her custom was to speak in short, almost abrupt, sentences. Yet the man felt some unusual element of embarrassment in her tone. 'He is anxious about the Uncle. He says: "I have disquietude about your Uncle. He makes pity to see, so much he misses you. I do not like his looks. I find him congested. He has vertigo. But you know him—he will not hear of your being recalled. Indeed he will not admit that anything is wrong with him. To hear him one would believe that he prefers you to remain away. A long honeymoon, for the turtle-doves—that is what he says."'

She broke off, and once again a burning wave of colour mounted in her face.

The languorous desert mood was still upon Ughtred. He listened to these messages from the distant North Land of troublous memories, feeling that they could not perturb the pleasant inertness of his mind. Rather, his thought wandered away from the meaning of her speech to an idle pleasure in the watching of her moving lips, of the incredible gleam of her hair where the sunshine caught it; of the wave of carnation that ran from the white column of her throat up to the clear space of forehead, between the parted wings of that hair.

'Will you read the rest for yourself?' she said, with a dropping of her voice from its forced note to a shaken undertone.

'Wait a minute,' he said.

Vaucelin . . . Crossforth . . . Aglaé and Uncle Annibal; they were far away from his present sensations, and he was content that it should be so. This sun-steeped languor of mind was good; he would prolong it. He pulled her down beside him on the lounge.

'Is your hair really on fire?' He touched it and laughed. 'I declare it is!—You are a kind of wonder of sun ripeness—you were made for these lands.'

From her hair he ran his fingers to her cheeks. Some lines of Swinburne's sprang back to his mind:

. . . swift and white,
And subtly warm, and half perverse,
Sweet as a soft sharp fruit to bite,
And, like a snake's love, lithe and fierce. . . .

he murmured, and then had a small satisfied laugh again to see how, under his touch, the carnation deepened in her cheeks. This strong, breezy, wild creature, who faced the world severe and untamed, as one of Diana's own train! He knew himself to have unlimited power over her. By the mere touch of his fingers he could make leap her blood and bring to the fierce eyes a glance of passionate submission.

It was no wonder that to play upon this rich lyre should have begun to mean much to him; much not only of charm but of interest. And under these great skies steeped in light, every moment bringing a new revelation of world-beauty to his senses, he—atom in the immensity—had at last ceased to analyse every movement of his own soul—had even forgotten that he had a soul to watch. She caught the wandering hand, pressed upon it one of those quick savage kisses that, in his poet's heart, he had called the kiss of the Amazon; then she repeated in his ear:

‘Please read.’

With an impatient sigh he raised himself and took the sheet. She pointed her finger, amber with sun and wind.

‘And what has the absurd person to say, that strikes you as being of so much importance?’

He strove to speak good-humouredly against an inner sense of irritation. How foolish not to let sleeping dogs lie; to thrust this message from an odious bygone before him!

Then, as he read, he started and in his turn the blood rushed to his face.

‘There is no denying it, my dear Solange,’ the Frenchman had written in his precise caligraphy, ‘your Uncle misses you, and he is not well. I do not ask you to shorten your voyage, but allow an old friend to say that if you have any news for him that you know would delight him, I beg of you not to allow any British ideas of prudery to interfere—I beg of you that you will tell him frankly. In short, *ma petite* Solange, if your good Uncle, who has always loved you like a father, heard that he might, before too long, become *bon papa*, it would give him a new lease of life. New life, he wants it.’

Ughtred laid down the letter and looked anxiously, almost apprehensively at his wife. She was no longer blushing, no longer agitated. She returned his glance with one of extraordinary softness; then she said with a simplicity that, even in the turmoil of his mind, he recognised as beautiful:

‘Ughtred—I will write to-day to my Uncle and tell him that he is going to be *bon papa*.’

The man still stared, his apprehension of the meaning of her words lost for the moment in the meaning he saw written on her face. He had once thought that open mouth, with its panting air of eagerness, cruel; had thought the look in her defying eyes, repellant. . . . That was in the old days, when he disliked her. Of late, since in a curious unexpected and unanalysed way he had begun to love her, he had taken pleasure—yes, even within this last minute—in the defiance of her personality, untamed and of the wilds, savagely virginal to all but to him, her master! But the face he saw before him was transfigured, incredibly tender. He searched in his whirling brain for the words to describe it, and, as he found them, his heart was stabbed. For the words were these: ‘It is the face of a mother!’ She leant towards him.

‘Are you not glad?’ she asked.

Her voice was quite indulgent, as if all at once she could

understand and make allowance. He did not know how to answer, did not know even what he felt. Only a phrase from a play of Shaw's—one of those rare impressive expressions of a deep human emotion which the fantastic dramatist occasionally allows himself—was voicing itself within him: 'What is this? Is there in me a father's heart, too?'

'If you are glad . . . I am glad——' he stammered.

She put both her arms round him as she sat and drew his head to her bosom. He recognised that into that love of hers which had played such wild and ardent music, there had come the harmony that had hitherto been missing. Her touch was maternal. She was not his mate of the desert, his creature to caress or to neglect—he had shame for all his recent thoughts, all his recent attitude. This was his wife: the mother of his child.

Solange wrote her letter and sent it with joy. But before the train that carried it could have passed Beni Souef there came a telegram from England summoning them back in all haste. Comte de Braye was dying.

CHAPTER IV.

THREATS BETWEEN THE LINES.

ANNIBAL DE BRAYE was dead. He had been dead a week when the travellers landed in Europe. That mighty frame, so full of passionate life; that heart, at once fierce and childish, had passed to eternal stillness. His had been so dominating a personality, his presence had been of a vitality so immense, so rousing, so authoritative, that Ughtred's first sensation on hearing the news was a surprise, almost amounting to incredulity. The telegram of evil tidings met them at Naples, on the day after the funeral at Overbecq; and Ughtred instantly decided to take his wife straight home to Honor Maxwell.

M. Vaucelin met them at Calais, quite openly and garrulously tearful, with the melancholy pomp of the ceremony still raven about him. In the dim chapel, under the gleam of the old solemn windows, they had laid him; his dust would mingle fitly with his 'Moult noble, moult puissant' forebears.

Annibal de Braye was the last of a great line. The younger branch of Kleenebecq could scarcely claim the same blood, certainly not the same spirit. Of the pure race none now but Solange.

In the large stiff bedroom of the Terminus at Calais, over-

looking the harbour, Solange and Vaucelin sat opposite each other, upon the two walnut beds, with the simplicity of their race, while Ughtred, apart, watched them, feeling all at once so immeasurably distant from them both and from the whole situation, that it was almost as if another sphere held him. The details were mercifully scant. Annibal had been struck down as by a blow from a mace, and had expired in a few days without recovering consciousness.

'I should never have consoled myself, if I had not been there,' the good-natured Vaucelin declared. 'And yet what could I do? I held that poor cold hand, but, God knows, he was already very far. Ah, I had written to you! Had I not reason to be anxious?'

'And I wrote to him,' answered Solange, 'and he never received my letter! Oh, poor Uncle, it would have made him so happy!'

Tears ran down her cheeks as she spoke; easy, tender tears, like her grief, which was full of love and ruth, yet left the deep inner content of her heart undisturbed.

Vaucelin gave a start that set him dancing on the springs of the narrow white bed. He clasped his hands in a spasm of woe-stricken intuition.

'*Ah ciel*,' he exclaimed, 'is it indeed so? Heaven is cruel, my child! *Ce pauvre ami* . . . and it was all his desire! Ah, if he could have held your little one in his arms! *Non*, I cannot resign myself!'

But Solange had a smile through her tears. The sweetness of her hopes welled up even through the bitterness of this moment. Ughtred turned abruptly to look out, unseeing, over the white glass roofs of the station upon the green waters and the great parapets of the harbour.

Marriage, birth, death—all these primal events of humanity, Solange took them with a large, unquestioning simplicity. His own analytic, unquiet spirit was far from such acceptance. The emotion common to life he had always dreaded.

The marriage that had been thrust upon him, the existence that was to spring from it, seemed still to him mysteries so fraught with possible tragedy that he shrank from gazing deep into them. And now, in this rush of natural experience, he was brought face to face with the fact of death. His vivid imagination pictured the scene he had not witnessed: the crashing fall of the mighty man, the awful inertness of that splendour of strength; the death-bed; the horrible journey with the coffin; the funeral. He saw both the chapels, one up in the north country, the other in the dreaming

Flemish plain—those sanctuaries in which his soul had known such novel and tormenting moments—saw them black-draped, dim with incense vapour. He saw the catafalque and the yellow tapers, the garlands of flowers. In his nostrils rose those poignant vapours, associated now with the taint of death. Death! The darkness of it all was about him. He seemed to be under the shadow of its wings. As he stood, staring forth upon the sunny sky and dancing waters, the whole bright vision turned black before him, as if a pall had fallen. Bitten at the heart by an anguish that had no distinguishable shape, he glanced quickly at his wife.

She had flung herself back on the bed, leaning on her elbow, in an attitude that threw into relief the vigorous lines of her young figure. In spite of the journey's fatigue and of the anxiety that had accompanied it, in spite of the shock of grief, there was not a line upon her smooth ripe face. The tears had not dried upon her cheeks; but her eyes shone with an indomitable brilliance from under her stained eyelids.

'There is the very triumph of life!' he thought. And once again the unreasoning panic took his heart. 'Life has you in its grip,' John Gordon had written to him once. It was true. The horror, the cruelty, the hazard of life had fastened upon him. He was no longer only the unwilling victim of nature's purposes; he had become her servant. He had taken another's life and made of it what she would. Whither were they being hurled; how would it be with them both? Solange caught his wistful glance upon her and smiled. His heart grew warm—a second before so chilled. Was she not Niké? What could conquer Niké?

The lazy mood of sensuous content had fallen from him from the moment of her tidings at Assuan. The old self-torturing spirit had returned, but with this difference: the problem was no longer how he should endure his unchosen existence, but how it would fare with that other life laid into his charge with the most awful completeness of responsibility. Not only one life now! . . .

M. Vaucelin slid off the bed, wiped his eyes, pocketed his handkerchief and looked at his watch; then in a sudden bustle declared he had only just time to catch his Paris express.

'Don't move, my child. Take care of thyself. Take care of her, my friend!' He kissed her on both cheeks. 'What a pearl, *hein!*' He wrung Ughtred's hand, hurried to the door and came back, exclaiming at his own stupidity. 'Tut, tut! I lose my head in these emotions. I have a letter for you.' He flung it on the

bed. 'From thy aunt, little one. She remains at Overbecq for a week. *Sapristi*, but I must hasten!'

The door was closed with a slam. Ughtred and Solange stared at the black-bordered letter; and then their eyes met, and it came upon the man, with a singular impression, that, in all the details Vaucelin had poured into their ears, in all Solange's questions, there had been no mention of Aglaé.

For himself, the thought of her had haunted him often enough. Elusive she had ever been to him. Now the sense of that elusiveness was so intensified in his mind that he could not picture her, amid all those scenes of woe, with any substantiality. A faint shadow about the death-bed, a something in trailing widow's weeds; something without eyes, without face, slow-moving, kneeling beside the catafalque, dragging long misty crapes among the incense clouds! Never anything more. Was Aglaé weeping, or—horrible suggestion—behind those films of mourning had she a secret smile? Or was she just . . . thinking?—Hecate, sitting alone in the deep caverns of her mysterious soul. He looked at the letter with repugnance.

'I am going to read it,' said Solange in her brief accents. She took it up then as if it were a noxious thing that she was loath to touch. Then she met her husband's eye, flushed and, with the jerk of the head familiar to her old defiant moods, tore open the envelope. Ughtred walked to the window again, anxious that she should not think him perturbed. He was, however, acutely conscious that the touch of that hand, even from a distance, was bound to be troublous to them both.

'Read.' Solange's voice was harsh. She came towards him and thrust the letter into his hand, avoiding his glance. Then, in her turn, she moved away.

Vaguely he felt what this mutual shrinking from another's hurt meant for them both—what of separation, of doubt! But, as his eyes followed the lines of delicate writing, every thought became merged in one of boundless consternation.

'Dear Child,' wrote the Comtesse, 'the catastrophe that has overwhelmed me touches you, I know, very keenly; but with what a difference! You are starting on life; I see all finished that meant life to me. You are now everything that I have left in the world. Have you room in your young happiness—ah! the sorrow could not kill that—for a creature so broken, so hopeless as myself? Let me come to you, at least for a little while, my children, till I can accustom myself to the empty desolation of my house. Do not

be afraid of my tears, for when I look on you I will find smiles.
Ta pauvre et vieille tante qui t'aime.

'But it is impossible!' exclaimed Ughtred.

The blood was buzzing in his ears. It was the same cry that had escaped him that day at Crossforth when Aglaé had unfolded her scheme of marriage. The words of her letter seemed to dance in his brain, searing his thought with a horrible irony. 'I shall find smiles.' She was smiling then! Smiles for their young happiness. What was this phrase about tears? Ughtred did not believe that she could shed tears. Had he not seen her eyes in many moods—in stress of fierce emotion, in veiled tenderness, seen them alluring, tortured, panic-stricken, furious?—but never, never with the softness of tears!

'It is impossible!' he repeated, still more violently, and then was brought back from his dizzy whirl of anger and dismay by the knowledge that his wife's gaze was fixed upon him with ominous intentness: some such look as the falcon may fix upon its prey before it darts. Her parted lips had their old fierce twist; but behind this fierceness there was an anguish that had robbed her young face of all its lovely bloom.

'You are then very much afraid?' she said in a low voice.

'Afraid!' He grew pale in his turn. 'How dare you say that?' he exclaimed. And even as quick remorse seized him—to have spoken to her roughly, to have felt anger towards her, now!—the storm cloud cleared from her countenance. He realised that his tone of hot indignation had been more convincing than any protestation.

'Ha,' she said, as one suddenly relieved, and stretched out her hand to his, with her frank gesture, more boy-like than womanly.

'It shall be as you wish,' he clasped her fingers tightly as he spoke. 'You know that,' he went on in a firmer voice. 'It shall always be as you wish.'

She looked at him steadily as she answered:

'But I have no choice. She harboured me when I was homeless.'

In his heart he paid homage to her unswerving straightness of soul. And, even through a perturbation of mind that reflection rather increased than diminished, he was subtly conscious that the intimate part of himself, the part that counted in his own eyes, the spirit, remote, even while lulled into quiescence, had moved nearer to the spirit in her.

(To be continued.)

